WHAT CAN THE JEW DO? . . . . BY DAVID L. COHN

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THE Saturday Review OF LITERATURE

VOLUME XXVIII No. 4 NEW YORK, SATURDAY, JANUARY 27, 1945 FIFTEEN CENTS

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by Waverley Root
Reviewed by Edgar G. Sisson

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"AN INTELLIGENT AMERICAN'S GUIDE TO PEACE"
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by Joseph D. Bennett
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"THE PRIVATE LIFE OF THE MASTER RACE"
by Bertolt Brecht
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"GREAT SON"
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SEEING THINGS
(A Review of "The Fighting Lady")
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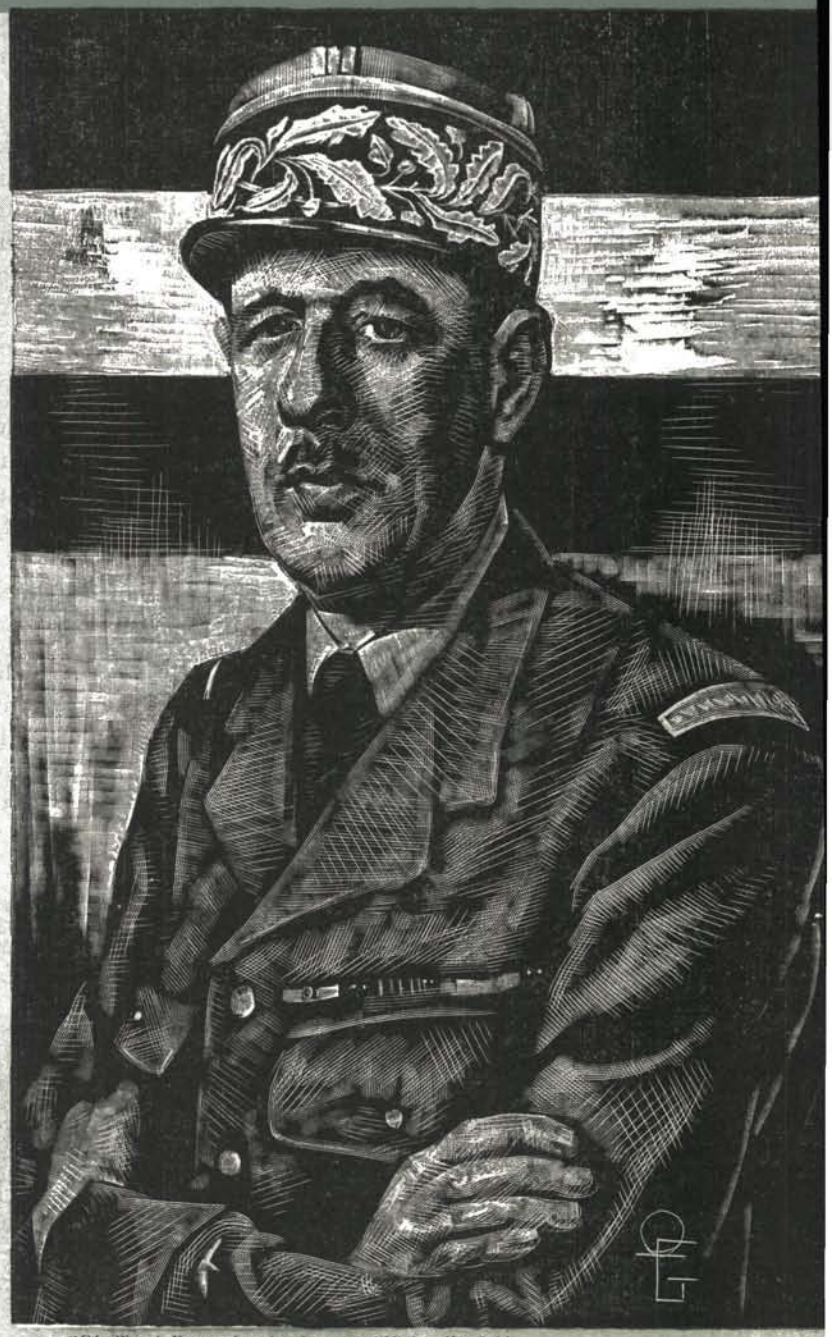

—S.R.L. Wood Engraving by Frances O'Brien Garfield

"If philosophy has a laurel wreath to give, it should go to DeGaulle." (See page 9)

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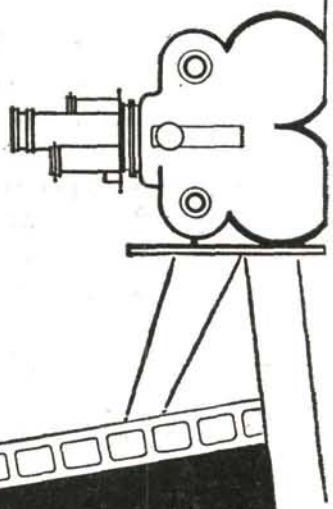

by **ARTHUR MILLER**

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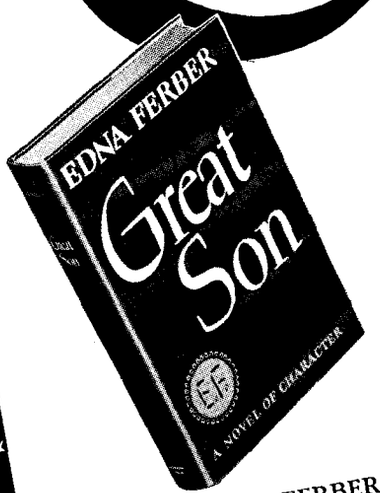

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A publishing failure . . .

PERHAPS we've had a little too much expression of satisfaction with our publishing activities in these pages. We keep talking about our belief in our books and indicating how they have justified that belief and reached the audience for which they were intended. It doesn't always happen that way We've had failures on our list, and one of the bitterest failures occurred late in 1943 when we published Taro Yashima's THE NEW SUN. We did not expect it to be a financial success, but we did think it would be noticed by the men and women of good will, that it would say something important to the opinion molders, at any rate, among the American people: namely, that the struggle of a human being for the simple dignities of the democratic way of life is one of the most moving evidences of man's incalculably slow progress in this weary world. The trouble was that Taro Yashima is Japanese.

Taro is a young artist, and his book is his autobiography in pictures and words—very few and simple words. On the dedication page the author writes: "I thank the America which lets me talk and write freely about people and events which I shall never forget." Taro had been in this country five years when we first knew him, and he was very poor. He and his wife, also an artist, escaped from Japan where all of their young lives had been spent in the fight against militarism and fascism. They had gone to live among the factory workers. Taro had already had several exhibits of cartoons and oil paintings and had been writing, but he deliberately sacrificed his recognized standing to denounce openly with his various works the growing fascistic tendencies which he saw throughout Japan. He joined a progressive movement, and later an underground movement, traveled through the country, made a living by illustrating cheap magazines. When even that became impossible he continued to fight by working on an underground newspaper. He was jailed ten times, and his wife was seized too, and before they escaped from Japan they had lost two sons.

We published Taro's book because he is a fine artist with a great story to tell. It heartened us to know that there *is* an underground movement in Japan. The first reaction from the booktrade, when our salesmen were selling it in advance, was bad. "Nobody will buy a book by a Jap," most of them said. We had printed 2,500 copies, and in order to arouse interest we sent copies not only to our regular reviewers but to liberals in every walk of life—art, government, politics. We gave away 700 copies before publication, and the advance sale to bookstores was less than that. The reviews were excellent, but their tone was not persuasive. They said fine things, but they rang no bell, nor did they reveal the exciting core of what this book was saying. (We have often wondered why, when people are not interested in a subject dealt with by a book, they will not absorb, even if they do read them, the finest reviews, nor will they even *see* the advertising. For of course that was the reason —people weren't interested.)

A few were. Some of the people to whom we sent copies got excited and wrote us wonderful letters. Some of them buttonholed their friends and said, "Look, this is the most important book I've seen this year." A publicity man offered his services free and was baffled when he got nowhere. Another publicity person called up and abused us, said we weren't doing right by this wonderful book and that she personally would take it over and see that it became a best seller. We sent her several free copies to work with and waited. Nothing happened. A few people bought the book, and they would write us or call us up, either congratulating the author or blasting his publishers because we weren't running full page ads in the *New York Times* every week. We had already spent $1500 on the book, considerably more than a dollar a copy, and we knew it was no use.

We thought the book would help at the nine relocation centers where the Japanese had been concentrated, but so many of them couldn't read English that we asked Taro to do a Japanese translation which we would offer free with every copy of the book we sold to the Japanese. The text was numbered

so that they could look at the pictures in the book and read the translation in the brochure. Taro spent many days doing this, and we printed 2,000 copies. We sent free books and pamphlets to every relocation center and offered liberal terms if they wished to stock a few copies. Taro made posters in Japanese for them, too, because he wanted them to be encouraged about the future. Nothing ever came of that either, except that one commissary department sent the book back and said that he hadn't ordered it: what did we mean by bothering him?

Because we kept on giving away copies, we had to reprint—just a thousand, and we have almost nine hundred of them left. The book has been bought by 1,800 people, which some of our publishing friends say isn't so bad "for a book by a Jap." They know, too, the imperturbable prejudices of the public, the vast areas of indifference which can kill a book. THE NEW SUN is a failure, not because it lost us a few thousand dollars but because, as far as we know, it has supplied no yeast for the American mind. More than that, it is disheartening to think of that mind's influence on the rest of the world and on its future.

Taro is now in the service of the United States Navy, somewhere at sea, and still painting pictures against his enemies.

THE NEW SUN

by Taro Yashima

$2.75

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The Saturday Review of Literature

What Can the Jew Do?

DAVID L. COHN

IN September, 1944—the beginning of the sixth year of this war—the *Washington* (D. C.) *Star* published the following item:

> The Citizens' Committee on Race Relations plans to meet in the near future with leaders of the National Conference of Christians and Jews as the first step in its move to combat what the committee said was "growing" anti-Semitism in Washington. . . . The chairman declared that "anti-Semitism is definitely bad and apparently growing worse in Washington. It will challenge the very best we can do about it. . . ."

From other sections of the country come similar reports of growing anti-Semitism while liberal Gentiles and alarmed Jews seek means to combat this hatred which menaces not only American Jews but the whole American democratic system. The old lies and some new ones are repeated over and over again. Jews dragged the United States into the war but are staying out of the armed services and growing rich at home as Gentiles die in their defense. Jews "own" everything in America including the press, radio, and movies which they run for their own evil ends. They control the Roosevelt Administration. They are communists *and* international bankers. They are, in short, responsible for all the ills of the nation.

Week after week these monstrous charges are refuted by Jewish and non-Jewish authorities but they continue to be made and apparently gain force with the telling. It seems useless to demonstrate that Jewish wealth is simply in proportion to the number of American Jews; that Jews are an almost negligible influence in banking and in such powerful industries as oil, steel, railroads, automobiles, chemicals, meat packing, communications, shipping, coal, aluminum, farm implements, shoe manufacturing, aviation, lumber; that in Gustav Myers's "History of the Great American Fortunes," Jews play a trivial role; that perhaps the amassed wealth of all the Jewish millionaires in the country would scarcely equal the two-billion-dollar fortune of only one Gentile—Henry Ford; or that Jewish influence is predominant in only two smaller branches of American industry, the garment trades and the movies, both of which were pioneered by Jews.

It seems equally useless to point out that the Germans and Japanese may have had something to do with dragging us into the war, or to illuminate the fantastic irony that the American Army is battling its way into Germany to fight the Hitler fanatics who rose to power through the use of anti-Semitism while here in the United States anti-Semitism is rising. Of what benefit is it to show that from the Revolutionary War to this one Jews have fought and died in proportion to their numbers and have often earned awards for gallantry out of proportion

to their numbers? It is unhappy enough to be accused of lack of patriotism. But it is a melancholy thing indeed when such accusations sometimes drive Jews to boast of their patriotism so that one cannot even die quietly for one's country; when there is read into the *Congressional Record* page upon page of the names of American Jews who have died, been wounded, and won medals for bravery in this war. None of this matters. The same old charges are made just the same.

What does it profit Jews to prove that the largest press proprietors in the United States are non-Jewish? Or that the Jewish-owned *New York Times* is by universal consent one of the ornaments of world journalism, if not the world's best newspaper, distinguished for its lack of bias as well as its news coverage? The futile nature of the case was demonstrated sometime ago by *Fortune* when, seeking to destroy the canard that Jews "own" this country, it showed that Jewish influence was predominant only in the garment trades and the movies. Suppose that this effectively destroyed the canard? Would this not mean impliedly that in a country whose cult is efficiency and competence that they have risen to the heights in only two industries which are not of overwhelming importance? Would it not then follow that American Jews could securely establish themselves here and perhaps even gain the affection of the nation if they should deliberately debase themselves to the wealth and cultural level of impoverished sharecroppers? That instead of being businessmen, doctors, scientists, writers, artists, and run-of-the-mill middle class, making contributions of wealth and culture to the nation, they should so debilitate themselves as to become an economic and cultural drag on the progress of the nation? Are we to say that the test of survival of a minority group is its business and intellectual competence or incompetence?

WE have long had a genteel anti-Semitism here. It is expressed in part by the exclusion of Jews from certain resort areas, hotels, apartment houses, clubs, schools, and college fraternities. This, however, matters little except to the tiny and contemptible group of Jewish social climbers. More important, Jews are admitted into many privately endowed schools and universities only on a quota basis. The quotas are especially limited in medical schools and numbers of Jewish medical students are driven as far afield as Europe and Howard, the Negro university in Washington, for their education. It so happens that Jews brought medicine to Europe when they entered Spain with the Moors in the seventh century—six hundred years before Columbus set out for America—but this makes no difference. Similarly, one finds here a marked economic discrimination against Jews on the part of many employers who welcome them as customers but not as employees;

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whose help wanted advertisements read "Gentiles Only." Great Britain has had a Jewish Prime Minister and Viceroy of India, but no Jew may aspire to become President of the United States; during our entire history only four Jews have ever sat in the Senate, and a somewhat larger number in the House; while it is almost as difficult for a Jew to enter the State Department as for a Baptist to become Pope.

All of these things Jews manage to endure and with a minimum of whining or protest. But latent anti-Semitism, even of the genteel high church variety practised by some of the nation's well bred people, is not necessarily static. It may readily become dynamic in a period such as this of profound unrest, insecurity, and fear; when the Hitlerian poison has subtly permeated the minds of millions, and bewildered men seek a scapegoat for their troubles. For, it must be remembered, the anti-Semite is generally a man suffering from a sense of inferiority and few things give rise to a more violent hatred.

THE combustibles of violent anti-Semitism are present in all anti-Semites whether American or German, but when the sparks become flame it is not Jews alone who perish. The dangers of German anti-Semitism to the world were pointed out some years before this war began by the brilliant French journalist Raoul de Roussy de Sales. Speaking to American audiences he said he was concerned with the fate of German Jews not simply because they were helpless human beings but also because he feared that German anti-Semitism was a symptom of a disease which might become virulent and sweep over the world in the form of war. If, he continued, the Nazis should fasten their grip on Germany through anti-Semitism and proceed to war, Jews would suffer grievously. But non-Jews would suffer even more. There are only fifteen million Jews in the world but there are nearly ninety million Frenchmen and Britons alone. When, therefore, he concluded, Germans torture, murder, and pillage a helpless minority of German Jewish citizens under conditions of unimaginable brutality, let the world beware.

The warning and prediction of M. de Sales strangely illuminate Santayana's dictum that "It is a sombre privilege to be a Jew." (A rather Olympian rendering of the Yiddish dictum: "It is hard and bitter to be a Jew.") For centuries one of the conditions of this austere estate was that it was the Jews alone who wandered homeless on the roads of the world. But in the years since Germany invaded Poland he has been stripped of even this dark distinction. He has been lost in the

crowds of Gentiles of many nationalities seeking shelter from the German armies and the German torturers. His ashes are indistinguishable from those of thousands of Russians, Poles, Czechs, and others who went with him into the gas chambers and crematories of Majdanek.

There is now a rising anti-Semitism here. It would be reckless under the circumstances to say it could never assume a violent form, and no minority with a tragic history such as that of the Jews can go upon such a comfortable assumption. Consequently there are few American Jews who now do not feel insecure to some degree, and their insecurity is shared by all Gentile democrats who know that anti-Semitism is almost invariably the forerunner of tyranny for all. If, however, appeals to reason fail; if Christian charity dies and love is superseded by hate, to what and to whom shall Jews appeal? What shall they do? What can they do?

In my opinion they should make no appeals at all but conduct themselves as good citizens according to their lights and await the verdict of the majority with calm dignity. Certainly it is intolerable that one should be in a position where one can be constantly called upon by any vulgar passerby to justify one's right to a decent place in society. It is not only intolerable but it is, as the evidence shows, futile. Better extinction than a lifetime of cravenness and apology for the right to exist in a merely physiological sense. I, for one, should prefer extinction under these circumstances whatever my co-religionists may think, and I, as an American Jew speaking only for myself, think it time to state what seems to me the essential nature of the case. I would be crystal clear upon one point. I do not imply that Jews are blameless. Their virtues and vices are such indeed that at one stroke they produced Jesus and Judas. "Jews are members of the human race," wrote Mark Twain. "Worse than that I cannot say of them."

If the majority of the American people conclude, for whatever reasons, that they want to indulge in ruthless anti-Semitism, they have the power to do it. There are 130,000,000 non-Jews in this country as against 5,000,000 Jews. The task, moreover, aside from being messy, would involve no physical risks. The power of the majority is overwhelming and, as Israel Zangwill said, "The Jews are a frightened people. Nineteen centuries of Christian love have broken down their nerves." Once the Jews had been done in there would still be fun ahead with other minorities. There are thirteen million Negroes here and twenty-five million Catholics. And when they had been destroyed, those whose brutal desires had not been satiated could turn upon one another as the Germans are now doing.

The majority, then, has the power to destroy the minority, but before proceeding it must remember one thing. The hallmark of being adult is willingness to pay for what you get; an understanding that you do not get something for nothing. Thereafter the prospective buyer has only to decide whether the thing he wants to buy is worth the price. What is part of the price in this case?

First of all, anti-Semites must give up Christianity. It is slightly difficult to take communion wafers with one hand and slit the throats of Jews with the other. Even the Germans realized that this was impossible and consequently, with their dreadful logic, they sought to extirpate the religion of love and peace in Germany before embarking upon war, murder, and hate.

Second, it would be necessary to destroy the Constitution and scatter the ashes of the Founding Fathers. Democracy would have to go and with it the Bill of Rights; the great books would be burned and the universities perverted; the press debauched and truth driven underground. No man would be his own master and none could call his soul his own. And as the Jews perished there would perish with them numbers of Gentiles who are of the saving remnant—Christians, democrats, lovers of justice. Even in Germany there were such men and women but their tongues have long been stilled in concentration camps or death.

Third, it would be obligatory again to assassinate Mr. Lincoln. Some seventy-odd years after the Revolution the principles of the Founding Fathers were reaffirmed and made secure in a great civil war. The President of the United States held that a nation could not exist half slave and half free. Since, however, there is no essential difference between three million black slaves in 1861 and five million white

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slaves in 1944, the memory even of a man who pronounced such a doctrine must be obliterated.

Few Gentiles would willingly pay such a price for indulging in ruthless anti-Semitism and no Christian would even toy with the notion of making the purchase. Yet even in this nation, Christian, free, and democratic, in the midst of a great war, and with the ghastly German example before it, anti-Semitism is rising. How many American Gentiles are there who in their hearts agree fundamentally with the Nazis in their anti-Semitic attitudes but think merely that they went too far? They would like a people held in leash, a controlled hatred; a disciplined humiliation which would maim but not kill. These attitudes are common to a great many "nice people;" men and women who, by way of demonstrating their broadmindedness, say "some of my best friends are Jews."

They certainly would not themselves bash out the brains of a Jewish infant; pluck out the fingernails of an ancient rabbi; or pillage a Jewish shop. Many of them indeed would rush fruitlessly to the rescue of Jews in such a case little knowing that blood is upon their hands because they helped set in motion the train of events which inexorably lead to the definitive tragedy. Such persons are the breeding ground of violence because in the dangerous times in which we live it may be only a short step from genteel anti-Semitism of nice people to the brutalities of the concentration camp.

Anti-Semitism has not yet become a national menace to the United States. It is only at the stage when it is a personal tragedy that humiliates, frightens, and embitters individuals. It is obviously beyond the capabilities of the minority of Jews—the group against whom it is directed—to stop the progress of anti-Semitism here. They are too weak and too few. The greater part of the task of uprooting anti-Semitism must be done—if at all—by the Gentile majority with the Jewish minority coöperating. If, however, nothing is done and genteel anti-Semitism fanned to flame by the hatred of our times becomes a ruthless anti-Semitism, American Jews will die and with them will die the American freedom for which men have been struggling for two thousand years.

Even survival, however, can be bought at too high a price. A dignified death is better than a lifetime of degradation and humiliation. The upright posture of man is a biological disadvantage but a magnificent psychological triumph. It is too much, it seems to me, to ask even of Jews who have endured so much that they be deprived of that posture of man which lifts him toward the rising sun.

A Dissection of the War

THE SECRET HISTORY OF THE WAR. By Waverley Root. New York: Charles Scribner's Sons. 1944. *Two vols.* 645 *and* 632 *pp.* $10.

Reviewed by EDGAR G. SISSON

IF Waverley Root, newspaperman and researcher, had refrained from including "Secret History" in the title of his massive array of personality profiles, facts, claims, and opinions, he would have given the world an even more important and permanently useful work than he has done. There are few large "secrets" about the war. Both it and its backgrounds have been sprayed with outer publicity. Perspective and inner meanings, however, may be dimmed by time and clutter, or not realized at all. Mr. Root intends to prevent such a fatality. He seeks to bring both perspective and meaning into plain view.

He might better have said so, without accent on the sensational—which the reader will not find. The value of the work is in its rigid analysis, not in the minor "secrets," among which is the assertion that the German emissary Hess was lured to England by the British Intelligence Service. At any rate here is a budding contemporary historian, strong in democratic faith, and not yet done with the war, who will improve in the organization of his future material.

He has dug behind all official statements. He has written a reporter's near-the-scene and frequently on-the-scene political history of the period nearing Munich and on through about the second year after the American entrance into the war. He tells something, and often much, about almost every person of which the public heard in this time. Naturally he could not be every place, and he credits fellow researchers for aid given him in visualizing the developments in a number of countries.

—*Shelburne Studios*

Waverley Root

But he himself was in France for many years, and there when the country fell; and the chief pertinence of the whole history lies in the analytical treatment of occurrences and persons of that time and of the ensuing period of agony.

In particular, the stature of General DeGaulle grows in all dimensions by the author's consideration of him on philosophic as well as on military and political grounds. In that connection, we quote Mr. Root at length:

> When Pétain's aging mind [writes Root] proved unable to think beyond a capitulation which he seems to have been all the readier to accept because he preferred the ideas of the country he was fighting to those of the country he was defending, DeGaulle by "the guiding line of thought" was able to perceive that something great still might be achieved in the field of action by France. . . .
>
> It was not military perception alone which caused General DeGaulle to reach this conclusion, the accuracy of which has since been demonstrated. He has been generally recognized as a clear and logical thinker in the field of military matters. But to consider him solely as a soldier is to miss the profounder aspects of DeGaulle's character, which predestined him for the role which the defeat of France opened before him. His thinking had a deep philosophical content, in the direct line of French tradition. His literary style, sometimes dry to those unaccustomed to the more ascetic French writers, stems from Descartes. The qualities of mind which enabled him in military matters to throw aside the prejudices and biases of accepted concepts allowed him to pierce other problems with equal vision. And in reaching the decision that the fight was not lost and might usefully be continued, DeGaulle was swayed by considerations transcending the purely military field and deriving from the domains of philosophy.
>
> DeGaulle represented the continuity of French resistance, the refusal to surrender to the common enemy of all democracies. Pétain represented, not only surrender, not only willingness to collaborate with the enemy after the surrender, but actual agreement with the enemy in his attack on the democratic political principles with whose defense Pétain had been entrusted along with that of the nation.
>
> It seemed that there could be no choice between the two. Any democracy should have preferred the France of DeGaulle to the France of Pétain. In accord with the principle of the indivisibility of democracy, established by those recent events which had shown that the world had become too small to

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permit violently conflicting philosophies to exist peacefully within it, side by side, all democratic nations should have thrown their influence to the side of DeGaulle and away from that of Pétain.

The democratic nations did not throw their influence to DeGaulle—not for a long while. Yet DeGaulle inevitably came to later place among the leaders of the Allies. There he will be when victory is reached, and he will be one of the assessors of victory. He had written, "France must be present at the victory—this is my only goal." A seer, when he is spokesman of the soul of a nation, is not to be denied. If philosophy has a laurel wreath to give, it should go to DeGaulle. He has proved again that thought is practical, and has lifted it to a high place, for all to see.

Against DeGaulle as hero, Mr. Root measures not only Pétain but also Weygand as weaklings, from whose palsied hands France fell, first to military defeat, and then to the degradation of collaborationism. He is puzzled more by Weygand than by Pétain, and rightly so, for the military capability of Weygand, on his previous record, was beyond question. Yet it was Weygand, he has written, who "urged that the armistice must be demanded to prevent France from going Communist."

Although the author did not develop the subject further, he had in that sentence the clue to Weygand's course. He needed only a relation to earlier history. Weygand fought and beat a Bolshevik army in the war between Poland and Russia in 1920. His feat was brilliant. The Polish Army, after invading Russia and capturing Kiev, found that it had stretched its lines too far and began a retreat home. The Polish government called on France for a military commander, and Weygand was sent. Facing a desperate situation, he pulled the Polish Army back to the supporting base of Warsaw, and tempted the Russians, led by the amateur, Trotsky, to overreach themselves in their turn. Then he broke their center, nearly cut off their northern flank, and sent them scurrying. Russia accepted the outcome and ceded territory to Poland.

The Poles lauded and honored Weygand. But the General returned to France with a hatred, and also a fear, of Bolshevism. The emotions evidently remained with him. Those who remembered the Polish campaign expected him to adopt the same strategy when he took command of the French Army. The odds in his favor seemed greater than in Poland. It was expected that he would pull the French Army back to a strong battle line and then give battle. That he would submit without battle seemed unthinkable, and is in fact not understandable without the knowledge that he feared German rule less than the chimera of domestic communist revolution.

Fearful Weygand and willing Pétain could surrender the country to Germany but neither they nor all their collaborators could kill the spirit of France, the depths of which were beyond their shallow comprehension. DeGaulle, with greater powers of mind, called to the depths and they rose to meet him. He was the true leader, as the observing world presently, and laggardly, also discovered.

Mr. Root traces with care the route of DeGaulle's advance to Allied acceptance, and takes account of the obstacles encountered and of their conquest. It is not possible, however, within the scope of this review, to fill in the picture. Nor can more than mention be made of the fact that, while the major emphasis of the two volumes is on France and the concern of other countries with France, there are chapters on Poland, the Low Countries, Scandinavia, the Balkans, Turkey, Russia, the Neutrals, the War in Asia, and Germany's Home Front.

The canvas is so big that it is fortunate to have a natural center. That center is France and at the very focal point stands DeGaulle.

Your Literary I. Q.

By Howard Collins

CHARACTERS WHO ADVERTISED

The advertisements printed below were composed by characters from well-known stories. Allowing 5 points if you can identify the character who wrote the ad, and another 5 for the work in which he appeared, a score of 60 is par, 70 is very good, 80 or better is excellent. Answers are on page 32.

1.

ARE YOU BORED with your Business? Are you bored with your Dinner? Are you bored with your Wife? Don't bother with drugs or medicine! Take Tono-Bungay today!

2.

DO YOU WANT someone to handle your business? Someone to take the dog for a run? Someone to assassinate your aunt? Crime not objected to. I will do whatever job you have to offer provided it has nothing to do with fish.

3.

FOUND at the corner of Goodge Street, a goose and a black felt hat. Mr. Henry Baker can have the same by applying this evening at 221 B Baker Street.

4.

I'VE SNUFF AND TOBACCY and excellent jacky, I've scissors, and watches, and knives; I've ribbons and laces to set off the faces of pretty young sweethearts and wives.

5.

JARLEY'S WAX-WORK. One hundred figures the full size of life. The only stupendous collection of real wax-work in the world. Now exhibiting. Jarley is the delight of the Nobility and Gentry. The Royal Family are the patrons of Jarley.

6.

MY PATENT SMALL CLOTHES, trousers with a pneumatic inflatable seat, are a boon to those whose occupation is sedentary, a comfort to all travellers, civilization's substitute for steatopygism, indispensable to first nighters, and the concert-goer's friend.

7.

OUR SHOP IS HAUNTED by the ghosts of all great literature in hosts; we sell no fakes or trashes. Lovers of books are welcome here, no clerks will babble in your ear, please smoke—but don't drop ashes.

8.

SHAKESPEAREAN REVIVAL!!! Wonderful attraction. For one night only! The world renowned tragedians, David Garrick the younger of Drury Lane Theatre, London, and Edmund Kean the elder of the Royal Haymarket Theatre, London, in their Sublime Spectacle entitled The Balcony Scene in Romeo and Juliet!!!

9.

TONIGHT ONLY! "EAST LYNNE." To be presented at the Cotton Blossom Floating Palace Theatre. 1000 seats! 10 Piece Band! A Luxurious Floating Theatre within an Unrivalled Floating Palace!

10.

WANTED—A GOVERNESS. Must possess a knowledge of French, Italian, Russian, and Rumanian, Music, and Mining Engineering. Salary, one pound, 4 shillings and 4 pence halfpenny per annum. Apply between half-past eleven and twenty-five minutes to twelve at No. 41 A Decimal Six, Belgravia Terrace.

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The Art and Soul of Baudelaire

BAUDELAIRE. A Criticism. By Joseph D. Bennett. Princeton: Princeton University Press. 1944. 165 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by BEN RAY REDMAN

IN this slim, physically attractive volume, only sparsely marred by typographical errors, Mr. Bennett's approach to his subject is twofold, for he functions in two capacities: that of a critic judging a fellow writer, and that of a believing Christian judging a fellow sinner. In both roles he is eloquent, but, despite the almost inseparable mingling of literary and religious elements, I am reasonably sure that those readers who are interested primarily in Baudelaire's soul will profit more from this book than will those who are interested primarily in Baudelaire's art. And the readers who will be best satisfied are those who, with Mr. Bennett, accept Christian doctrine as "the final word about man's nature and destiny"; who would no more doubt the very real existence of Satan than they would dream of questioning the fundamental fact of original sin.

For them this "criticism" should prove a heart-warming and edifying document, tracing as it does the pilgrimage of a tormented creature, through all the lusts of the flesh and all the despairs of the spirit, to the ultimate, ineffable goal of salvation. But other readers, perhaps lacking Mr. Bennett's charity as well as his faith, may view Baudelaire's satanism and obsession with evil as romantic fixations of a driven and frustrated nature, rather than as concomitants of a spiritual progress; and they may conclude that, if he was saved at all, it was by the power of the word, made poetry by his own mortal genius.

Well aware of Baudelaire's artistic faults—his occasional diffuseness, his "abuse of oratory and rhetoric," and "his apparatus of horror imagery by which we often imagine he is merely trying to scare us"—Mr. Bennett in his "investigation" concerns himself only with the most successful poems and portions of poems, which he seeks to divide into three classes: (1) those "which principally exploit the paradox of the existence of good and evil, treating the problem of sin"; (2) those "which principally deal with the despair and suffering of the victim, who is victim both of remorse for sin and of the misery of modern metropolitan civilization"; (3) those "which present the pagan paradise of *volupté* as a refuge from pain and as a dream of peace, harmony, stately movement and universal correspondence of shapes, smells, sounds, colors, and textures." These classifications are superficially convenient and produce the appearance of a neat pattern, but, in fact, the catalogued elements spill over from one ticketed bin into another.

Apart from his introductory and concluding remarks, the critic generally follows a fixed routine in dealing with his material. First he quotes a poem, or a fraction of a poem, in the original French; then he translates the original into English, aiming "to transport accurately as great an amount of the suggestiveness of Baudelaire's language" as possible, "keeping at the same time to those English words closest to his"; and finally he paraphrases, explains, and interprets the chosen text, often enriching this portion of his work by quotations from Baudelaire's prose.

This would seem to be a thorough method, but in Mr. Bennett's hands it is not a particularly rewarding one. Indeed, it often complicates the plain, and spreads obscurity where light should be shed. Mr. Bennett does not indulge himself in the private jargon and parlor games so dear to some of our rising and risen critics, but he does share to a marked degree the failing of those philosophers who, according to Hugo of St. Victor, "extend a brief matter with lengthy circumlocution, and thus darken a simple meaning." Too often he squanders time and words in demonstration of the obvious and clarification of the clear. Too often he hints at, and even seeks, profound depths of meaning—"mine-galleries of meaning"—when all the meaning there is lies ready for an intelligent reader's grasping.

He does these things because he persists in treating Baudelaire as a difficult poet, when the truth is that few real poets have ever successfully gone to such pains to make themselves easily understood as did the author of "Fleurs du Mal." He does these things despite the fact that he himself pays tribute to Baudelaire's clarity and precision of expression. The result is that a reader who does not know French and who is meeting Baudelaire for the first time even in English has a better chance of understanding the poetry in question after he has read merely Mr. Bennett's more or less literal translations, than he has after he has gone on to grapple with the critic's exegesis.

—*From the portrait by Rouault, New York Public Library Collection.*

Baudelaire

One is worried at first by the translator's awkwardness and insensitivity, by his habit of using the English word that sounds most like the French, instead of a true equivalent,—as when he translates *"ta jupe large"* as "your large skirt," and *"Coucher auprès du ciel"* as "to couch close to the sky." One looks twice when he refers to a *bélier* (used obviously in the sense of a battering-ram) as a "horned ram," and then grants him that a battering-ram *could* be horned, though it usually was not. One stumbles over the clumsiness of a prose translation which reads: "In the caresses of your head of hair, I find again the languors of long hours passed on a divan in the cabin of a fine ship, rocked by the imperceptible rolling of the harbor water." And, in passing, one marvels at the grammar of the critic's own prose when he writes: "she is *pieuse* like Flaubert's Françoise is *pieuse.*" But when one reaches the translation of *"spleen,"* one simply throws up one's hands in despair.

In this poem the poet describes a mood and a scene in a cheerless city room, shut in by rain and dark and cold, and he continues:

> *Cependant qu'en un jeu plein de sales parfums, / Héritage fatal d'une vielle hydropique, Le beau valet de coeur et la dame de pique / Causent sinistrement de leurs amours défunts.*

And what does Mr. Bennett proceed to make of this passage? Amazingly, this:

> Whilst in a sport full of filthy perfumes, / Fatal heritage of a dropsical old woman, / The dandy valet of the heart and the lady of pique / Chat sinisterly of their defunct amours.

After which he goes on to discourse sagely and at length on the probable significance of "the dandy valet of the heart and the lady of pique" in the poet's scheme of things. No reader ignorant of French could ever suspect from Mr. Bennett's extraordinary translation and interpretation that Baudelaire was writing simply, albeit fancifully, of the Knave of Hearts and

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the Queen of Spades, court cards of a smelly, second-hand pack that was being used to mitigate a splenetic hour. Indeed, in view of the elaborate structure that Mr. Bennett has built upon his literal but false rendering, one even finds it hard to believe that the critic himself knows, or knew, what Baudelaire was saying in this poem.

However, as I have suggested, this book is for those who are interested in the poet's soul rather than in his art, so, instead of ending on a harsh note, it seems only fair to quote the characteristic paragraph with which Mr. Bennett concludes his criticism:

> *Notre pauvre Baudelaire* paid dearly for his final wisdom. His body and mind were exhausted by the long pilgrimage through despair, lust, and pride. He arrived in time to die. An imperfect man and an imperfect poet, he is the very type of the lost sinner saved and forgiven. He was reduced by his insatiable pride to humiliation wherein he grasped first damnation and ultimately salvation. We revere the skill and wisdom with which he actualized the life and distress of the spirit. We extend our sympathy to his acceptance of that humiliation which was necessarily purgation and preparation for the inestimable grace of humility vouchsafed to him when he collapsed at Brussels. We commend his spirit into the hands of Our Lord who finally took upon Himself the burden which tortured this man.

Introducing Bertolt Brecht

THE PRIVATE LIFE OF THE MASTER RACE. By Bertolt Brecht. English version and an essay on the Work of Brecht by Eric Russell Bentley. New York: New Directions. 1944. 140 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by F. C. WEISKOPF

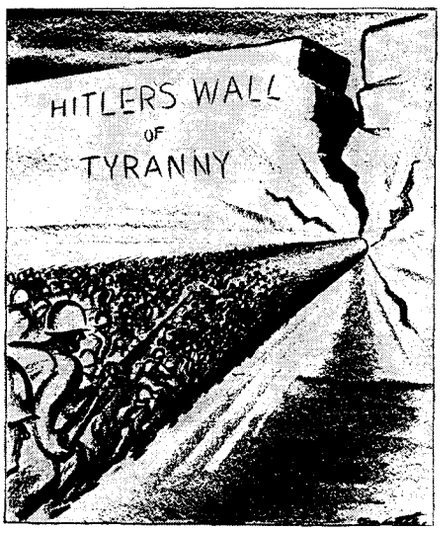
ALTHOUGH many Americans have enjoyed Bertolt Brecht's "Mother" on the stage, and his "Three-Penny Opera" on the screen, and although quite a few literary gastronomes got a taste of Brechtian prose in reading the British edition of the novel "A Penny for the Poor," and of Brechtian poetry in coming upon an occasional piece of verse in an anthology—the bulk and the very essence of the work of this powerful author-experimenter is still almost unknown in this country.

Thus, the publication of Bertolt Brecht's latest and most mature work, "The Private Life of the Master Race" (stage version of the bigger sized epic drama, "Fears and Miseries of the Third Reich," hitherto published only in fragments), supplies a long-neglected want. And the publisher as well as the translator deserve, for their courageous venture, a big hand from a reading public interested in a literature which is modern yet not modernistic at any price, experimental yet not *l'art-pour-l'artistic,* documentary yet full of poetic imagination.

In his essay on the work of Bertolt Brecht, the translator, Eric Russell Bentley, states that "it is well known that Stefan George's poetry is usually unsuccessful in translation" and that the same goes for Brecht "but for precisely opposite reasons," George using "a kind of poetic diction which in translation is merely precious" whereas Brecht "uses a kind of colloquialism which in translation is merely commonplace." And after a three-page analysis of Brecht's style, he confesses that he has to append, for those who know the language, one example of Brechtian poetry in German, because "no translation could prove my points."

In short, the translator himself felt the heavy weight of the knowledge that one ought to be another Brecht, writing in English, in order to produce an adequate English version of "The Private Life of the Master Race," while all other attempts, even those undertaken with a great deal of enthusiasm, craftsmanship, and *Einfuehlung* (empathy) are bound to yield but more or less perfect facsimiles.

Conscious of these limits, Mr. Bentley has done a thoroughly competent job of translation, rising at times to the height of brilliance. The American reader of "The Private Life of the Master Race," although not getting the full poetic flavor, the richness of allusions, and the glass-and-steel diction of the original, will still get enough of them to understand the intrinsic elements of Brecht's dramatic method, especially when he follows Mr. Bentley's advice to regard himself as the director of the play (keeping in mind Brecht's ideas about the epic theatre and its active, inquisitive, and non-contemplative audience). But quite apart from the acquaintance with a modern dramatic style which he might approve or disapprove—a stimulating acquaintance in either case—the reader will be aroused and impressed by a graphic picture of the fears and miseries molding the life of the people in Adolf Hitler's Third Reich.



—*Little, in the* Nashville Tennessean.
Irresistible Force

For, while undoubtedly belonging to the experimental vanguard, Brecht is at the same time an heir of the old popular tradition of Hans Sachs and Plautus and certain ancient playwrights of the Far East. I remember having seen, in Prague and in Paris, audiences composed of very heterogeneous "literary" and "unliterary" elements, captured and enchanted by the dramatic power of "The Informer" which is now a part of "The Private Life of the Master Race." And Mr. Bentley's report about front line performances of "The Jewish Wife" before Russian soldiers at Leningrad seems to testify to the folk poem qualities of Brecht's work.

In his essay, to which I have already referred a few times, Mr. Bentley gives a good, concise, and understanding interpretation of the main traits of Brecht's poetry and plays. But there is one point to which, I am sure, Brecht himself will certainly take exception. In trying to determine Brecht's position among his German fellow-authors, Mr. Bentley ventures so far as to assert that "his writings, as a matter of fact, include almost the only real 'literature of exile' that has been written in German since Heine, for the work of the other refugees is either a continuation of their former work or anti-Nazi polemic. The inner story of the refugee, the human significance of exile, has been adequately told only by Brecht. (The only other conceivable claimant is Berthold Viertel, author of 'Fuerchte Dich Nicht.')" Now that's doing injustice to Brecht and to all his comrades-in-exile, for there is, on the side of Brecht, no break in continuity and no absence of anti-Nazi polemic (in high literary form), and there are, on the other side, quite a few conceivable and even unquestionable claimants: Max Hermann Neisse, Johannes R. Becher, Bodo Uhse, Lion Feuchtwanger, Ernst Weiss, to name only a few of them.

A short introductory note and a bibliographical postscript round out the handsomely made-up volume which will be a definite addition to every discerning reader's library.

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How Shall the Public Learn Peace?

AN INTELLIGENT AMERICAN'S GUIDE TO PEACE. Edited by Sumner Welles. New York: The Dryden Press. 1944. 369 *pp.* $3.75.

Reviewed by NORMAN ANGELL

THE blurb on the dust cover of this book says that, "if the coming peace is to be genuine and enduring, the people must prepare for it now by preparing themselves"; and goes on to suggest that the book—a very large one—belongs in the American home, "not in the bookshelf but on the living-room table and near the radio, where every member of the family can turn to it for information and illumination in the coming years." It deals, we are told, with over eighty lands, concerning which the American public should know the facts—the trade, industry, and government of "the Albanians, Burmese, Costa Ricans, Portuguese, Koreans, Finns, Afghans, Bulgarians and Egyptians."

Well, the American people won't and can't know all that. No people could. And the way to make the best use of a book of this kind is to recognize the fact. This is a reference book, an encyclopedia, to be turned to for an outline account of such countries and peoples as happen to come into the morning's headlines. As such it is useful and can be recommended, though one may regret that much of its subject matter covers ground already fairly well covered by standard works of reference. The notes here given on "The Stakes in the Peace" possessed by each country are, however, an excellent additional feature. The book is somewhat flamboyantly advertised as under the general editorship of Sumner Welles, who writes an introduction. [Editor's Note: "Previewed" in *SRL,* Dec. 23, 1944.] In undertaking this editorship Mr. Welles doubtless felt that public understanding could be helped by a new encyclopedia of this type. That hope will be well founded provided only that books like this are regarded as encyclopedias and not as guides.

For if books of reference like this are to serve their best purpose in aiding the education of the public in foreign affairs, it is well to realize just what their function is and is not. They are guides only in the sense that a dictionary or a railroad timetable is a guide. They give you some of the facts concerned with foreign policy, but they don't enable you to determine what foreign policy those facts should dictate. It is natural, perhaps, that the publishers of dictionaries or directories should not regard it as their business to emphasize the limitations of such books. But it is very much the business of the public. For the failure to realize the proper function of a dictionary of facts buttresses a prevailing educational fallacy and confusion, which stands in the way of that very preparation of the public mind for the peace which this book proclaims as its primary purpose. If we assume that the road to sound opinion in foreign affairs and to good political judgment generally is to imbibe as many as possible of the facts about the eighty nations here listed, we shall labor under a grave illusion. It is not the number of facts which a man knows which gives him good judgment, but the degree to which he understands the relation of one fact to another

—Wood engraving by Frances O'Brien Garfield
Sumner Welles

and has a sense of which are the vital and key facts and which the minor ones, a sense which may easily become submerged if he attempts to memorize and load himself with a vast burden of encyclopedic knowledge. The Germans are past masters in such an art of piling up facts in their minds; quite a large proportion of educated Germans are absolutely encyclopedic—and usually incredibly stupid in most of the things which matter. "They know everything and understand nothing."

In his introduction Sumner Welles remarks that "the people of the United States in general have not in past generations thought well of the people of other countries," a generalization which might be applied to the people of very nearly every country in the world. Nearly everywhere, people at the bottom of their hearts would probably echo the remark of old Samuel Johnson that, "so far as I can see, foreigners are mainly fools and scoundrels." You won't dispel that innate feeling merely by disseminating information about other peoples, though that has its place. Anti-Semitism exists in people who come into daily contact with Jews, of whose qualities they have every opportunity of judging. These opportunities of knowledge are, in the case of the anti-Semite, so used as to draw completely unwarrantable conclusions. The Southerner, who is brought more than anyone else into contact with Negroes, is commonly a very bad judge of such questions as the biological qualities of peoples of different races. No man probably is so bad a judge of the Catholic as the Irish Protestant who lives next door to him. And so on down an interminable list of misunderstandings and misjudgments which mere contact and opportunities of knowledge do extremely little to dispel.

There is one sovereign basis for effective coöperation with other people: a deep and vital sense that we need them for our safety and welfare. If that sense exists, coöperation will be possible and the differences will not matter. If it doesn't exist, coöperation will not be possible, and if there are no real differences we shall invent them in order to flatter a sense of superiority—superior virtue, superior worth.

The many facts with which this book deals will not of themselves, without interpretation, illuminate the truth now most needing light: the supreme fact that no country now, certainly not America, can possibly defend itself by its own power. The dependence on others is created largely by certain technological and strategic factors, certainly part of the factual background of foreign policy. The outline histories of the eighty-odd countries here listed are often capably done. But there is no history of the One World, no sketch of the forces and developments which have made it one world, and yet so vulnerable as to be exposed to what Sumner Welles in his introduction describes as deadly peril, and the President in his message the other day as the most dangerous aggression that has ever threatened civilization. Perhaps that could be the subject of another encyclopedia, one bringing out a somewhat different order of facts—geographical, strategic, technological—which produce the vulnerability of the United States, reveal its dependence upon coöperation with others; the obstacles to coöperation, the line of least resistance through or over them.

BUY WAR BONDS

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Strictly Personal

PICCALILLI ON THE VERNACULAR

"DAST we slide on your cellar steps?" the kids of the frontier city of Cincinnati used to shout at my grandmother a hundred years ago. That *dast* amused her. It caught her fresh-from-Ireland ear. To me, it was the piccalilli on the hot dog.

So today, when some guy says another guy is *rud-jed* instead of rugged, I confess to a secret pleasure, something akin to the low joy I receive from the burlesque comedian's jokes. I wouldn't trade Huck Finn's "You don't know about me without you have read a book by the name of 'The Adventures of Tom Sawyer'" for all the organ music in Sir Thomas Browne. That use of *without,* on which Huck's sentence pivots, is part of my birthright. I get something of the same fillip of joy out of a sentence from the pub scene of Joyce's "Ulysses." A chimney sweep, walking the sidewalk, nearly drives his gear into the eye of a Dublin barfly. "I turned around to let him have the weight of me tongue," says the Dubliner, "when who should I see dodging along Stony Batter only Joe Hines." The barfly's *only* is as eloquent of the Dublin dialect as Huck's *without* is of the Missouri.

Part of the pleasure one takes in these two richly colloquial sentences has its source in the titillation of the unexpected. For force, the folk-speech also thickens the ends of words with extra consonants. Take the song about the old woman of Slapsadam, who planned to make herself a widow but instead made her husband a widower:

There was an old woman in our town,
In our town did dwell;
She loved her husband dear-i-lee,
But another man twyste as well.

Here in this snatch of song our fun in the comedy of sex (we sing what we are afeared to speak) is heightened by our delight in the lengthened *dear-i-lee,* and *twyste,* like its fellow *wunst,* is funny in its own right.

The speech of the folk darkens as well as thickens. Wherever there's an *r* growling around in a word, the folk-speech tends to pull its vowel back in the throat, gutturalize it. One of my favorite darkenings appears in a couplet in Lasses White's song, "If You Doan Like My Peaches Doan Shake My Tree":

Laid my head on the railroad track,
Thought o' ma honey, an' I drug it back.

Like Lasses's *drug* is the rouster's *whup:*

I whup my woman an' I black her eye,
But I won't cut her throat 'cause I'se skeered she might die.

Another bit of darkening, tasty as a puddin' string, occurs in an old Negro recipe for hoecake:

De way you bakes a hoecake
In de old Virginny 'tire:
You wrops it 'round a nigger's heel,
An' hol's it to de fire.

The American common speech uses *gone* for *went* and *went* for *gone* as commonly as it doubles the negative. This inherited practice of interchanging preterite and participle also roves down East. A herring-choker friend tells me that in Nova Scotia, where Caledonian macs are thicker'n spatter, a young man came up to the town of Antigonish to get work.

"Are you a mechanic?" asked the man to whom he applied for a job.
"Ah, no," replied the young man. "I'm one of the MacInness boys. Did you think you knowed me?"

Take a Paul Bunyan stride down to the tarheel country and read the letter of the maiden who thus reiterated to her lover this final proof of her love: *Dear Nappy: You know I love you. If I hadn't of loved you I wouldn't of let you did what you done.* From Brown County, Indiana, a region settled by men from the Southern Appalachians, comes this classic: *If I hadda knowed that you wanted to have went, I certainly would have see'd that you got to git to go.* That you got to git to go, that you got to git to go—that has a merry click. It sounds like Reginald Gardiner imitating a train going lickety-split. It has the bounce of the drumbeatin'est line of syncopation in all American dialect verse: *An' de black cat pick out de white cat's eye.*

Git is a word with the bark on it. It can snarl like Stagolee and crack like a whiplash. We've made it as Missouri as corncob and mule, as American as two bits and Shirt Tail Bend. Like the popular *set* for *sit,* it gets its wood-smoke flavor by modifying the vowel of the standard form. A Negro parody of the old popular hymn "Few Days" happily combines both popular forms:

Grasshopper settin' on a sweet pertater vine,
Few days, few days!
Shanghai rooster creep up behin',
Few days, get along home.

The men who had the git-up-en-go to push across the Alleghenies into Kentucky and on into the Western Territory and the Illinois country carried *git* along with 'em. They drove with it. They used it to sum up their Great Revival theology: *As you do you'll git according.*

THE contraction of *than* to *n* after comparisons yields a slew of racy Americanisms. Billy Boy's *quicker'n a cat can wink its eye* has the speed of light in it. Surely the colloquial contraction in *darker'n the inside of a nigger's pocket* makes it a mite blacker than *dark as the inside of a cow. Tighter'n the bark on a tree and harder'n climbin' a peeled saplin' heels uppard,* both have in them the good old backyonder flavor of frontier life. And *smaller'n the little end o' nothin' whittled down to a point* is absogoddamlutely* small."

The use of *them* as a demonstrative is the mark of the manual worker. He finds *these* and *those* a little sissified and high-toned. He feels more comfortable in *them shoes* than in *those shoes. Them* is a word with a strong end; a man can get his teeth into it. Like the Irishman's *me* for *my, them* beats *these* all holler for force. The Irishman's *Give me some likker to temper me pain* has the same shirt-sleeve, spit-on-me-hands wallop as the American's *Shut them winders!*

Between you and I, him and her drinks too much—such a confusion of pronoun cases achieves a vitality beyond the reach of the correct forms. In many other instances the variety colloquial American reaches for and

* Alternate: *absogoshdarnlutely.*

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gets is got not so much by invention as by adapting one thing to the use of another. When the American credo chants *It's better to have been a has-been than a never-was,* it's coining a noun out of a verb, and so is the old mammy when she locks her fingers over her belly, puts her feet out to the fire, and asks in the reminiscent mellowness of age, I *wonder whar is my good ole usterbe.* The younger man who complains that the *ugly's out on her wusser'n the smallpox* is making an adjective do the job of a noun. The Ohio command, *Outen the lights,* forms a verb out of an adverb, and the Kentucky man's remark, *Why he's been 'round these parts risin' eighty years* creates a preposition where only a participle was before. One of the most flavorsome of these inventions I once read on a card in the country store of a Florida cracker with more lines in his red neck than in a relief map of a river system. His hand-lettered sign behind the counter read: *Kwittin' credit till I git my outin's in.*

The Florida rosin heel showed a characteristic feeling for style. The American common speech is full of it. A couplet from the sad ballad of the hoss-drovyer and his gal, telling

How this young woman did break
her lovyer's heart,
And when he went and hung hisself
how hern did in her smart,

surely manipulates the pronoun with masterful skill. There's style in the tragi-comedy of the hillbilly's remark: *There's only two places for a woman: one's in bed, and t'other's a-fryin' meat.* Colloquial American can hurl the quadruple negative with block-buster force. Remember Mrs. Wiggs's advice to her daughter: *Whatever you do, don't you have nothin' to do with no students, nohow.* The Indiana characterization of a stringsavin' snugfist,—*when he gits a dollar, it's got home*—sure hits the center of the cuspidor. And when the Kentucky gal up in the hills across the river declared, before she gruv herself to death, *If I can't be tablecloth, I shore don't aim to be dishrag,* she put the tears of things into the two bare, contrasted cottons.

In the hands of a master, be he literate, the everyday speech of the American people can have a homespun loveliness that catches at the heart. The Negro's *Sometimes I feel like nothin', somethin' tho'owed away* sure makes lyrical the ache of the aloneness that can be man's. And in Huck's wonderful evocation of the Mississippi on a still clear night there's a touch of the mystery of things that sometimes rises out of late night and early morning: *The river looked miles and miles across. The moon was so bright I could 'a' counted the drift logs that went a-slipping along, black and still, hundreds of yards out from shore. Everything was dead quiet and it looked late, and smelt late.*

Yes, there's humor and beauty and mystery in the common speech of our people. And other things, too. Such a humorous corruption as *shecoonery*—anticipates the fermented words of *Finnegans Wake; solemncholy* grafts *solemn* on *melancholy* in a mood anything but sad. Colloquial American also adds new twists of rhyme to the resources of the language, as in that merry bit of farmyard dialogue:

Said the little red hen to the little
red rooster:
"You don't come around as often as
you uster."

The polysyllabic pomposities of the 1840's which blackface minstrelsy exploited—*How does your corporosity segashuate this evening?*—were strutty and dry; they creaked in their too-many joints. It's perhaps no great loss that they have gone where the wood-bine twineth, where the Dutch comedian lies down with the Stage Irishman. Genuine Negro corruptions, usually backgrounded by the humor of situation, are hosses of another color. I'll long remember an old Negro head rouster's *block and tickles* for *block and tackle,* the syncopation of experience into *expe'nce expense* behind his oft-quoted, *Expe'nce—that's the thing what does it.*

Although Mark Twain claimed he used seven different dialects in "Huckleberry Finn," although today students of the American language distinguish three main dialects—Eastern, Western, and Southern—the American vulgate is pretty uniform throughout the country and of course the radio is daily tending to increase that uniformity. Made in America by all races, colors, and creeds, the American common speech is the heritage of all Americans. It has humors to make its people merry.

HORACE REYNOLDS.

The Political Tragedy of Argentina

BY BREAD ALONE. By Betty de Sherbinin. New York: William Morrow & Co. 1945. 250 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by KATHERINE S. ROSIN

THIS is a half-and-half novel—half cream and half skim milk. The cream is the author's penetrating understanding and brilliant analysis of the political tragedy of Argentina. This renegade country has great natural wealth, high standards of living, and the graceful style of life and easy conscience which usually attend these blessings. She is over-civilized. Her people care little what government they have so long as they can continue to have their dinners for forty, their strawberries and rich cream in the afternoons, their overabundance of beefstew, money, flowers, and beautiful houses. The result, Miss de Sherbinin discovered, is a political isolationism far worse than anything in our own once-notorious Middle West. An occasional attack of bad conscience leads to a feeble attempt to remedy the inner corruption—a signed petition, some inside intrigue based on the power of money and foreign trade. But the corroding indolence is too strong. The wavering revolts are easily quenched before they reach any proportions at all. Most of the renegades give in; the others are exiled or imprisoned, and the smug, strutting little colonels remain in control of their weak and corruptible government. It is an easy country for foreign intrigue and propaganda. The Germans have taken root there, and so have the Americans. Whichever side is currently the winner in the far-distant war has the upper hand in Argentinian politics.

This under-cover struggle of foreign powers is the theme of Miss de-Sherbinin's novel. They are personified in a German embassy official, an American soldier of fortune, a wealthy scheming Dutch trader, and several unhappy Argentinians who are the unwilling pawns of these manipulators. The setting is dramatically and psychologically ideal. But unfortunately, now we come to the skim milk. As a story, the novel moves slowly and heavily, with many false starts. After a sinister and dramatic beginning, reminiscent of an international spy story, the author suddenly drops to a snail's pace where nothing happens except endless and monotonous searchings of conscience on the part of every character. There is a plot, but it never seems to get going. The characters have reality and substance, and for the most part they make sense, but the action is far too much in their minds. It is a heavy book, full of purpose but lacking in lightness of touch, subtlety, and drama. It is a pity that Miss de Sherbinin, with her genius for insight, both into individuals and the tragedy of a country, couldn't have played more dexterously with her material. It is the kind of novel of which one is forced to say: "You really must read this book—it tells *everything* about Argentina,"—in the kind of voice which means: "However it's more of a duty than a pleasure."

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THE X-DAY DIRGE

WE happened to tune in on a radio news commentator the other day just in time to hear him say that the entire nation was worried about a forthcoming X-day. It was clear from what he said that X-day would be the day of doom. As we listened, we wondered what this X-day was that it should cause such unmitigated apprehension. We thought back to 1924, when some cheerful soul predicted that the world would end at midnight, June 30, 1924. Large numbers of people sat up that night to witness the grand finale, a Gideon Bible in one hand and aspirin tablets in the other. Now and then, a few of the more reckless would peek through the side of the window shades just to see what the approach of universal disaster looked like.

Our commentator had something of the same spirit as he pictured X-day. America would be a place of vast disorder, disintegration, and despair. The jobless would be strung out across the country from Hoboken to Hollywood. Factories would be the giant tombstones of what were once busy, bulging industries. Class would be arrayed against class. Racial tensions would throw the melting pot into reverse. And these were only the opening verses of the commentator's Jeremiad. The later verses compounded the catastrophe.

What interested us particularly about this *memento mori* was that our lachrymose commentator went on to identify X-day with the day marking the end of the war.

Now, we are unsophisticated enough to believe that the end of this war, whether you call it X-day or V-day, or whatever you wish, is an occasion for hope and rejoicing. Not that all our troubles will be automatically solved by the end of the war; far from it. But at least we will have settled the somewhat pressing problem of America's physical survival, aside from whatever comfort can be taken from the knowledge that the greatest retrogressive force ever mobilized in the history of the world will have been turned back and perhaps—if we are lucky—even extinguished.

This X-day commentator is not unique. You can find the members of his tribe almost everywhere: People who have given up the coming peace before they have even lifted a finger to help advance the war; people who have reduced to a rigid mathematical formula the impossibility of post-war domestic health without even comprehending the one-plus-one problems of victory itself.

As we listened to this X-day commentator, we wondered about other peoples in this war. We wondered about the Chinese, with some thirty millions dead after ten years of war, flood, and famine. Are they griping and groaning about the coming peace, about X-days? Certainly not. They are looking forward to the coming peace because they see in that peace a chance not only to re-build a nation but to build on an idea that has been promised them, an idea that is good enough to die for and that certainly should be good enough to live for. We wondered about the Russians, with some six to ten millions dead in this war, with countless other millions homeless, with thousands of miles of scorched earth. Are they griping and groaning about the coming peace, about X-days? Certainly not. The end of the war to them will be the greatest blessing in their history. We wondered, finally, about the English people after five years of blackout—not merely the blackout of bright lights, but the blackout of everyday life; after five years of working and sleeping in wet cellars while overhead the sky was alive with death; with 1,300,000 homes damaged or destroyed, or one out of every three. Are the British griping and groaning? Certainly not. They are weary—of course; it would be a miracle if they weren't; but they see the end of the war as a chance, a real chance, to make good. We Americans may not be in agreement with them concerning their precise definition of that chance, but at least they have something they believe in for tomorrow.

What do our X-day mourners believe in? Do they have any sense of the American chance that the end of this war will bring? This war is no giant bagatelle game where, if you win, you get a sudden windfall, with all the bright lights flashing on and bells going off as a sort of Götterdämmerung in reverse. All you get—and no people can ask for more—is a chance to prove that you are worth your salt. In this case, it is a chance that will have been bought with the lives of hundreds of thousands of Americans, and there is something absurd and obscene about the whining argument that there is nothing we can do to justify that sacrifice.

No nation in history has ever been in a better position to use its influence for world good. No nation has ever had more to bring to the making of a lasting peace. James Reston reminded us, in his "Prelude to Victory" three years ago, that the Chinese require two words in order to spell the word "crisis." One word was "danger"; the other "opportunity." The end of the war will produce a crisis in America, true; but alongside the danger will be an opportunity of such dimensions as history has never before seen. But before that opportunity can be realized it must be recognized.

N. C.

Big Chief Sunrise

By Samuel F. Thomas

KNOCKED out his pipe of dawn on the morning star;
Stamped ash to earth; up, trail; and bowed his head
Beneath Orion as he passed the far
Bright eastern gate of silver mountains. Shed
His fluttering headdress,—blue, white, purple, red,—
His feathered dreams. Outstretched a big right hand,
Shook down the flame from Shasta's summit, spread
Quick fire from Pendleton to Rio Grande,
From Poudre Pass to Cowlitz, kindled sand
Of Utah's driest drive, where rivers die,
To hurdle flat strewn mightiest downward land
Beyond the Snake, across the western sky.
And now the flame flies up the glacier walls,
And down Tahoma hollow great ice falls.

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Is France a Patient?

SIR: Dr. Kallen ["Is France Incurable?" Dec. 9, 1944] confuses problems which are already complicated. By decision of the United States Supreme Court, an American corporation is a *person;* but no court of science (outside Fascist Italy and Nazi Germany) has decided that a people is a *person* to whom the known data of individual physiology and psychology can be even indirectly applied; nor has any decided on acceptable proof that a state, society, or nation is an organism. France is no more a patient who needs to be cured than the French are a schizoid psyche which needs to be fused. And a pseudo-scientific jargon which refers to France's defeat as "catatonic withdrawal from battle" and France's occupation by the Germans as "shock-therapy" is as distorting as the pseudo-moralistic jargon which suggests that France is a cloaca which needs to be purged. France is a collectivity of human beings who are neither ants nor atoms—a collectivity welded into the permanent union of nationality by centuries of history, by great material and moral, human, and spiritual achievements of men acting alone and men acting organizedly.

Dr. Kallen's thesis of the split between "the dream-fantasy" and "the waking life" (which is reminiscent of some of Professor Jung's contributions to Nazi "culture") is not consonant with an objective interpretation of the long sweep of French cultural and political history. Liberty and change have had many and great spokesmen in France; but so have authority and permanence: it still remains to be seen which of the two great eighteenth century politico-philosophical currents will attain and maintain the ascendant in the Fourth Republic. But this struggle—an aspect of the endless civil war within the spirit of man—is merely deformed by being likened to schizophrenia of the individual psyche.

In London in December, 1941, I had the honor of helping prepare the first American propaganda leaflet dropped by airplanes over French soil. Under a picture of the Statue of Liberty were the words: "To France which gave us liberty we give back liberty." It took a tragically long time but that debt has been paid. Now, the Frenchmen who for four years resisted slavery, have a good chance—the best chance Frenchmen have had since 1792—to win the final battle for the democratic Revolution. It is a battle which is being fought by men, not by molecules; whose goal is human security, dignity and fulfilment, political power, social and economic reorganization—not mystico-clinical wholeness; whose terrain is the bloodied, tormented soil of France—not any vaporous surrealistic dreamland.

Dr. Kallen says: "achievement (of a strong, free France) cannot be guaranteed in advance. But what can, save death?" If he knew the men and women of France, the men and women of the "resistance," as well as I know them, or as well as he knows what he calls the "dream-fantasy" of France, he would know that the last word of any article about France is not death but life.

PERCY WINNER.

New York, N. Y.

"Somewhere in Brooklyn:—Dear Mother. . . ."

"De Minimum"

SIR: Miss (Mrs.?) Eva Matthews Sanford, in your issue of Dec. 30, censured heavily your printer and proofreader for the "de minimum" error in Arthur Train's article in the Dec. 2 issue.

Now, I have a high regard for printers and proofreaders. I once knew a printer who was honest and industrious, who was good to his mother, and did not use profanity or play the saxophone.

I also know two proofreaders who never talk out of the corners of their mouths and, what is more, seldom swipe the pencils or eye-shades of their fellow proofreaders.

Thus I feel it my duty to rise in defense of your printer and proofreader with the following verse:

NON OMNIA POSSUMUS OMNES
(To E. M. S.)

The printer and proofreader who serve *SRL*
Have suffered sore pain and contumely as well
While lying trussed up on a prosodic rack
For granting the Ablative's rights to the Acc.
Ah! yes, they wronged *de.* but by *ad* they did better,
Observed Latin usage, and hewed to the letter.
The proof? Read the phrase in whose final word no
Inflectional shift made *absurdum, absurdo* . . .
So now, 'stead of keeping them under the hammer,
Let's send them a copy of Bennett's Lat. Grammar!

WALTER E. WARING.

Lincoln University,
Chester County, Pennsylvania.

Botticelli's Venus

SIR: Divergence in opinion as to the intentions of the painter, Botticelli, takes on a co-incidental interest in two recently published biographies, "Ronsard" by Wyndham Lewis and "Botticelli" by Joseph D. Bennett.

"Botticelli," says Lewis, quoting Huysmans, "is one of the few artists of the Italian Renaissance who frankly acknowledge their Virgins to be Venuses and vice versa." But Bennett, in "Baudelaire" declares: "Botticelli's Venus . . . is not made of flesh, but of gold, steel, light and diamonds."

BERNARD SOBEL.

New York City.

"The Moral Athlete"

SIR: Ralph Barton Perry's "The Moral Athlete" reminds me of that old 'un concerning the difference between a Puritan and a Churchman.

The Puritan committed all the same sins as the Churchman, but he didn't get any pleasure out of it.

NILS RIGHTMYER.

Lewes, Delaware.

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NORMAN COUSINS, *Editor, Saturday Review of Literature.* "If one word was all that could be used to describe the quality that sets ELLERY QUEEN'S MYSTERY MAGAZINE above the others in the mystery field, that word would probably be 'distinction.' By 'distinction' I mean a magazine that knows what good writing is and knows how and where to get it. If Queen's Magazine isn't the finest in its field, it's the world's greatest mystery what is."

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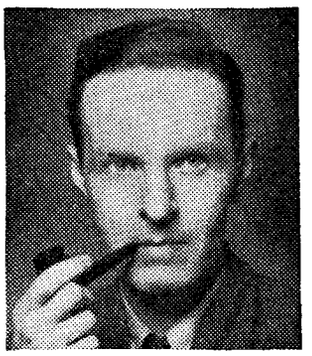

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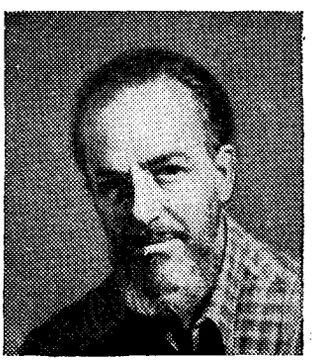

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TRADE Winds

THE BIG NEWS of the week in literary circles, of course, is the publication of Edna Ferber's "Great Son," her twenty-first book as I figure it, not counting five plays in collaboration with George Kaufman and one with Newman Levy. Miss Ferber has come a long, long way from the day when she took her first job at three dollars a week on the Appleton, Wisconsin, *Daily Crescent!* One book alone—"Show Boat"—made her independently wealthy, and "Cimarron," "So Big," and "Saratoga Trunk" earned almost as much. She lives in queenly fashion today on a beautiful estate in Fairfield, Connecticut, and nobody begrudges her an iota of her success. An uncompromising and tireless fighter for the causes she believes in, Miss Ferber has never let personal considerations or questions of tact and expediency stop her from hurtling into battle, and probably because she is fighting for practically the same things I am, I love her for it.

Doubleday, Doran have been Miss Ferber's publishers since Lord knows when—a mutually profitable and exemplary author-publisher relationship that reached its fullest flowering in the days when Dan Longwell, now a potent force in *Life* magazine, was serving his apprenticeship in Garden City. When Miss Ferber gets annoyed, even a Nelson Doubleday or a Harold Ross blanch and flee for cover; Dan, however, could always soothe and placate her by a combination of genius and soft soap that have made him what he is today. In truth, the campaigns that he laid out for "Show Boat" and "Cimarron" became models for the exploitation of many a subsequent best-seller, and Miss Ferber was not the only Doubledame who bemoaned his falling into Luce, if not evil, ways.

Miss Ferber has an engaging way of appearing helpless and unarmed. In reality, she is as efficient as a B-29. I met her once on a boat bound for Europe. "I know I'll never get my nine bags off at Plymouth," she sighed several times. "I'm such a bad manager." Of course, the first nine bags off the boat were Miss Ferber's, and she was sitting comfortably in her first-class compartment for London before most of us had been able even to find a customs inspector to examine our luggage.

We had previously discussed the Tauchnitz continental editions, and Miss Ferber had been rightly incensed over the insignificant fee they had paid her for a huge sale of "Cimarron." "They want 'American Beauty' now," she said (that was her current success), "but unless they offer me a regular royalty instead of a piddling outright payment, I'll never let them have it." It developed on the Plymouth quay, however, that they had not waited for her official approval, for there at the news counter, big as life, was a substantial pile of fresh, uncut copies of a Tauchnitz edition of "American Beauty." I could not resist buying a copy and presenting it to Miss Ferber with the suggestion that she browse through it on the way up to London. Her discovery of the title gave Plymouth such a moment as it had not experienced since the day the English fleet sailed out of its harbor to await the coming of the Spanish Armada!

An hour later, as we rode through the beautiful Devonshire countryside, I found Miss Ferber gazing intently out of the car window. "Lovely, isn't it?" I commented. Miss Ferber wheeled and said sharply, "Tauchnitz won't get away with this. I'll start suit the very minute we reach London!"

"Great Son," as you will be learning any moment from the lead reviews, is a story of the early days of the American Northwest and will probably sell just as well as her earlier triumphs. Something within her seems to have said, "Go and Cimarron some more." This is her second Literary Guild selection. As Edna Ferber herself wrote in concluding her autobiography, "A Peculiar Treasure," "A lovely life I have found it, and thank you, Sir!" . . .

ISOBEL DE PALENCIA, former Spanish Republican minister to Sweden and Finland, and the kind of woman who inspires the people who meet her with fresh confidence in the future of the human race, is writing a book of her experiences since the fall of Barcelona, which will be published by Longmans, Green. The present title is "Smouldering Freedom." . . . In Cleveland, they're calling that best-seller, "Forever Under." . . . An irresistible new song, called "Rum and Coca Cola," seems destined to outsell "Mairzy Doats." . . . The Concord Book Shop staff is still puzzling over an episode that occurred on the last day of the recent holiday rush. A lady and her daughter asked for a book on boat building. The clerk showed them Chapelle's standard volume, but the five-dollar price tag bothered them. "Phone papa," said the lady, "and see if he's willing to spend that much." The daughter reported in due course, "Papa says the hell with it. You should buy a Hershey Bar instead!" . . . Mrs. T. R. Collins, of New York, writes: "I thought you might enjoy the latest exploit of the cross, uncoöperative, and exasperating housekeeper at our hotel. We gave her a cash gift for Christmas (about four times what she deserved) and received in due course a printed (feels like engraving) form card which read, 'To thank you for your lovely gift and to let you know that it is greatly appreciated.' Our dear housekeeper had carefully scratched a line through the word 'lovely'." . . .

THE *MAGAZINE OF SIGMA CHI'S* memorial issue to George Ade includes articles by some of America's greatest writers and certainly will be a collectors' item. By common consent, Ade's most memorable lines (in fact, they became shopworn clichés) were: "the cold gray dawn of the morning after", "He made me feel like thirty cents", and "Early to bed, early to rise, and you will meet very few prominent people." Ade also named the famous product "Cascarets" and coined the slogan, "They Work While You Sleep." Purdue's most loyal alumnus, he lost no opportunity to sing its praises. At one banquet he found himself surrounded by graduates of the Big Three. "Purdue?" frowned one paunchy son of Eli. "I don't believe I ever heard of that school." "Maybe you haven't," snapped Ade, "but I've got a lot of Yale men working for me." A small-town editor feuded with him one time and threatened "I'm going to expose you in my next week's issue." Go as far as you like," said Ade genially. "I can walk clear outside of your circulation in four minutes flat." His most successful play was "The College Widow." His mother came to see it and said, "George, do you really get more than five hundred dollars a week for

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"Bolitho gets the most advanced ideas!"

doing that?" "Yes, mother," answered Ade. "George," she said earnestly, "You keep right on fooling them." . . .

RAMON ADAMS'S "Dictionary of Western Words" (U. of Oklahoma Press) inspired Charles Lee to plague his readers with this: "Anybody who ever hobnobbed with a bronc-snapping, bush-whacking, line-riding, leather-pounding, range-bumming windmill monkey (cowboy to you) ought to know what is meant by (1) a shakedown, (2) a muley, (3) a juniper, (4) a puncture lady, (5) a zorilla. Puzzled? One is a bed; two is a harmless cow; three is the Westerner's equivalent of a hayseed; four is a woman who sits and gossips at a dance, putting a knife into someone's reputation; five is a type of black cattle of the early longhorn breed. . . . Another book to enlarge your vocabulary is A. M. Taylor's "Language of World War Two," (H. W. Wilson). A Wag is a member of the K-9 corps (Dogs for Defense). A Dovetail is a WAC second lieutenant in charge of a platoon of GI Janes. Fanys are the British First Aid Nursing Yeomanry. Snafu is snafu. . . . And Joanna Carver Colcord, descendant of five generations of New England sea captains, has reached into the Snug Harbor of sea terms which have made a place for themselves in landlubbers' speech, and produced a 213-page book called "Sea Language Comes Ashore" (Cornell Maritime Press). It is being featured in shops on Lexicon Avenue. . . .

SIMEON STRUNSKY, witty and urbane conductor of "Topics of the Times," was a welcome guest at a recent *SRL* round-table luncheon. He held forth on the need for a simple but visible device on taxicabs in motion that would indicate to would-be passengers whether or not they were occupied. New York taxis are wearing out at the rate of over two hundred a day. When the weather is bad, it is a familiar sight to see a score of people huddling under every hotel marquee waiting for a cab, with apartment house doormen whistling frantically and waving pocket flashlights as the disappearing hacks slosh by. Pedestrians jump from the curb, stepping neatly into a foot or so of water, only to discover that the cab they are hailing is already loaded with five very superior passengers. Mr. Strunsky's little signal would help a lot. . . . This is the sort of thing Frank Adams used to thump for so successfully when he was running a daily column. Why doesn't some paper make him get back into harness? One Conning Tower was worth twenty of the columns being ground out by some of the featherweights syndicated today. If you don't believe me read "Nods and Becks," Adams's latest collection in book form (Whittlesey House). . . .

"MY WOODEN LEG has been giving me a lot of pain lately," sighed a famed foreign correspondent at the Stork Club the other night. "How could a wooden leg give you pain?" asked Martha Brown. "It's my wife's fault," the correspondent explained. "She hit me over the head with it."

BENNETT CERF.

"From where I sit"

'Twas the night of Christmas and all through the radio program called THE AUTHOR MEETS THE CRITICS not a favorable voice was heard. Three critics tore him plot from character. But there was drama in the way ROBERT ST. JOHN arrived fifteen minutes late on the program to defend himself amid the smoking ruins of his reputation. It was noble like the nobleness of the Britons he writes about in IT'S ALWAYS TOMORROW, his new book. If he was out of breath, he was certainly not caught with his rebuttal down.

For people who had never read the book, this program certainly made it enticing. They went to bed that Christmas Night with visions of the book's mysterious Yashna and the lovable Polly dancing in their heads. When the radio audience met the critics letterhead-on, they made mincemeat out of them. "Superacrimonious criticism" they called it, *and they ran to buy the book.* One listener said, "The critics' review of ROBERT ST. JOHN'S IT'S ALWAYS TOMORROW has made me eager to read FROM THE LAND OF SILENT PEOPLE." Another stated, "If ROBERT ST. JOHN will be happy to have ten people accept the high standard of ideals he expresses in IT'S ALWAYS TOMORROW, he has only nine more to go for I certainly intend to read the book."

If ROBERT ST. JOHN'S "high standard of ideals" rang a bell with his admiring public, it also unleashed the pens of many a critic-hater. "There's little of the human element in critics," one letter ran. "More often than not they're stuck on themselves. I know, I married one." Completely ignoring the Christmas spirit, an irate John Q. wrote, "Those critics should have been shot at sunrise this morning; the female critic first!" And this at Christmas time!

All in all, the critics' super-acrimonious criticism put ST. JOHN in the enviable position of one who has had his book banned in Boston. We may be prejudiced, but we listened to the program too.

paul

DOUBLEDAY, DORAN

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Seeing Things

THE FIGHTING LADY

ALTHOUGH I have watched carriers at sea, chimneyed against the horizon, and used to look longingly at the British *Indomitable* when, spruce and spacious, she was tied up astern of us in North Africa, I had never been on a flat top until I saw "The Fighting Lady."* Now, like everyone else lucky enough to see this Navy film, I feel as if I had been carrier-borne, and sailed into battle as a member of a flat top's crew.

The feeling of a carrier, as sensed in "The Fighting Lady," is a special one. It is different, utterly different, from that of such other naval vessels as a cruiser, an operational flagship, a destroyer, an LST, or an LCI(L), upon which I happen to have been. Large or small, lean or chubby, cozy or arrogant, these others have given their first allegiance to the sea.

Their tip-tilted guns have admitted the presence of the sky only to frown upon it, as intruders should be frowned upon. The land has never been a part of them. To them it has been either the friendly port they have left or the enemy soil which was their target or their destination.

If they were cruiser- or destroyer-large, they would submit to being tied up to a pier. But, so far as mere land was concerned, they stood off it disdainfully. They kept their distance and were prepared to make the land keep its. Even the lesser vessels betrayed their dislike. If small enough to come in close, the shore's approach made them mad. They snarled at it, and opened their jaws or struck with their arms the minute they scraped hostile beaches.

If they carried planes, as cruisers do, they carried them almost as afterthoughts and in spite of themselves. The homing pigeons they housed were not unwelcome. They had their definite uses. But they granted them little room, just enough to get them off. Manifestly planes were not their major business.

These other vessels were all of them water babies, if neither pure nor simple. They grew in grace in proportion to their concern with the high seas. Phoenician sailors, or those Greeks who came to Troy, or those Romans who bore the mighty Julius across the Channel, would have understood their major problems, however amazed and baffled they would have been by their armament and equipment.

But a carrier is different. That difference becomes a part of you the moment in "The Fighting Lady" you find yourself aboard. Even when seen from a distance a carrier is different. She is a ship that isn't quite ship shape. She is a ship that is deliberately off-center. She maintains her balance in spite of being lopsided. Her superstructure is pushed to one side. It rises there as a concession; an indication that the sea has had to make way for the air; a proof that sea and air power are now one.

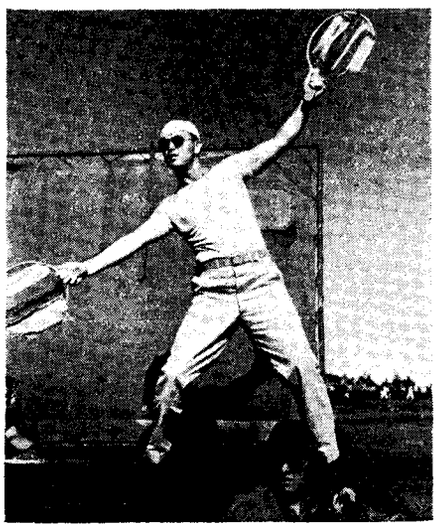
A carrier's plane deck is more than a deck. It is an airstrip afloat. It is land set in motion; a treeless atoll which happens to be a bird sanctuary; a runway on the waves. That plane deck is also a nest for eagles, not mountain high but high enough for soaring above the high seas. That clean spread topsides is to a carrier what the keystone is to an arch. Everything else builds up to it. It is as final a confession of functionalism as can be found; as final an expression, too, as this world knows of what is dauntless in the spirit of men. The great *de-fy* here is made positively against three elements at one time—against the sea, the sky, and the enemy wherever he may skulk.

It is because "The Fighting Lady" makes us feel the dignity, danger, and reality of this triple threat, as no other record of sea action in this war has so far done, that it stands in a class alone. It is more than a documentary film. It is an emotional experience. It does not stop, as the bromide has it, with bringing the war home. It carries both planes and an audience straight into enemy waters, making the Battle of the Pacific everyone's battle, as indeed it should be.

It succeeds in achieving its preëminence because it strikes that difficult balance between the personal and impersonal which is the truth of war. It remembers the one sailor as well as his ship; the solitary pilot no less than his plane; the single tested American even when the whole of America is represented. Its concern is a group led into action by great faraway forces, but it does not lose sight of the individuals who in this action somehow manage to remain individuals. In other words, although it is the work of such a machine as the camera, and the record of such machines as planes and a carrier in battle, it does not forget the men without whom these machines would be as useless as the war itself would be without point.

"The Fighting Lady" is the saga of a carrier of the *Essex*-class. When last we see the survivors among her people, they are veterans of attacks on the Marcus Islands, Kwajalein, Truk, Guam, and Saipan, forging on a tested and triumphant ship into the Philippine Sea along with a great force of American naval vessels. But when we are introduced to these men, they are youngsters for the most part who have never before seen the sea or faced enemy fire.

In one short, almost breathless hour



—From the film
". . . the ballet of the signalmen . . ."

**THE FIGHTING LADY, a U. S. Navy documentary film in Technicolor; made by the U. S. Navy and Twentieth Century-Fox; at the Victoria Theatre. Producer, Louis de Rochemont; narration by John Stuart Martin, spoken by Lt. Robert Taylor, U.S.N.R.; photography supervised by Captain Edward J. Steichen, U.S.N.R., Lt. Comdr. R. L. Riddleton, U.S.N.R., Lt. Comdr. Dwight Long, U.S.N.R., and Philipe DeLacy.*

SCREEN

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we have watched boys grow into men. We have seen their school-day innocence lost and the lines of their faces grow older, although their smiles remain poignantly the same. We have reached for books in the carrier's library, eaten her ice cream with gratitude, and tested our memories to identify at last as steaks the luscious red meat in her galleys.

We have seen her engines below and her planes above. We have met her gunners, her cooks, and her barber. We have enjoyed our lazy days of sunbathing along America's East Coast; squeezed through the Panama Canal; and headed, with ever-mounting tension, into an incredibly blue Pacific.

We have watched the ballet of the signalmen who, when welcoming returning planes, speak a language of pantomime as eloquent in its dignity and grace as any dancer can command. Upon nearing the first target, we have felt the suspense rise as surely as August heat increases without pity at the approach of noon. We have attended the last church services before the battle. Attended the final briefing of the pilots, too. And known the agony of waiting. These are moments when life and death draw close together; when one wonders about both of them; when home is also carrier-borne.

Our hearts have leapt in our mouths as over the loud speaker, with the insistence of doom and yet with a strange jubilance, the call to General Quarters has been sounded. Thereafter we have not only watched the planes spread their wings for the take-off, and waited for their often crippled return, but we have flown with them.

A hail of tracer bullets, hot and as deliberate as rivets tossed by workmen on an emerging skyscraper, has risen up to meet us. They have arched towards us from Japanese ships and shore batteries, or from planes winging straight for us. With equal fascination our eyes have followed the path of our own tracers, heading downward. We have seen scores of Japanese

planes burst into flames redder than the Rising Sun. And one Japanese-held island and airstrip after another funneled with smoke beneath us. And ship after ship in the enemy's scurrying fleet mortally wounded by our attacks. And we, on *The Fighting Lady*, have ourselves just missed a direct hit.

"The Fighting Lady," in other words, is more than a battle picture. This is why it is the best Navy film to date, and one of the best pictures to have come out of the war. It is at once an Odyssey of skies and waters at war; a vivid panorama of battle at its most terrible moments of onslaught and annihilation; and a letter home.

It is the kind of letter every man aboard would like to write, and usually blames the censor because of his inability to do so. Its subject is what every member of a carrier's crew has seen with his eyes and guns. Its concern is what no man has the memory or skill to tell; what no pen or brush can report except in terms of highlights and suggestions. If this is so, the reason is that it sets before us what only unblinking cameras can record, when their reels of Technicolor are handled as skillfully as they are here by Captain Steichen and his fellow-photographers.

Great credit for "The Fighting Lady" must go to Louis de Rochemont for the brilliance and humanity of his editing, and to John Stuart Martin for the excellence of his script. Great credit must also go to Lieutenant Robert Taylor for the simple manliness of his reading. But the greatest credit, needless to say, must go to the members of *The Fighting Lady's* crew who, as actors, are giving performances which in reality are making history. The film in which they appear does not fictionalize facts. It leaves them facts, but makes them human. The fact that they *are*, and can be, human is at once the noblest and most appalling fact of war.

JOHN MASON BROWN.

SOLUTION OF LAST WEEK'S DOUBLE-CROSTIC (No. 565)

SCOTT:
LAY OF THE LAST MINSTREL

Amid the strings his fingers strayed;
.....
In varying cadence, soft or strong,
He swept the sounding chords along;
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His toils, his wants, were soon forgot;
Cold diffidence and age's frost
In the full tide of song were lost.

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Love-Letter to Seattle

GREAT SON. By Edna Ferber. New York: Doubleday, Doran & Co. 1945. 281 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by NATHAN L. ROTHMAN

MISS FERBER is a swell writer, gifted, fertile, and imaginative. And she is unfair to book reviewers. Here she has written a lively contemporary American romance, with certain inadequacies plain upon the face of it. We are prepared to speak to her in pained and loving accents. But right before us, in nice large type, is a two-page introduction in which she has ticked off these very inadequacies, neatly, clinically, and without omission. Absolutely unfair. We hope this is not the signal for a new trend of self-reviewed novels. Probably few novelists could give so accurate an account of their own work. "This book," she says, "should have been a trilogy . . ." but the vast dimensions of her subject so baffled her that she decided to ". . . attack with a slingshot. . . . Here, in capsule form, is that which should have been a lavish and prodigal feast." This, in essence, is her own analysis of it, and it is very, very true.

Seattle is her subject, the Northwest region of which it is the hub, Rainier looming over it, the lumber and the mines, the whole sprawling history between the gold strike and the two great wars. It is a great story, and Miss Ferber has conceived for it an American family that grew along with it for four generations of time, not a device of unique effectiveness but one that would serve to bind things up. Yet instead of moving along largely and binding it together, she has telescoped it into really capsule form, and for no earthly reason save that she was averse to writing "one of those 1180 page romances . . . the awesome and bulky type of volume that is so tough on the stomach muscles when read in bed . . ." (still that introduction). But that is sheer nonsense. There is nothing wrong with 1800 page romances except that the wrong people have been writing them lately. Here exactly was the time and reason for writing a huge, exciting novel—a big theme, and a writer with the yen and the power to do it well. We should certainly like to have seen those three tomes by Edna Ferber, with all of the Northwest written into them. Instead she has squeezed four generations of national and family history, of a people sprawling across a landscape, of mining camps and city growth and moneygrabbing and love-search, into 280 pages, using all the convenient and ineffectual tricks of flashback to do it.

Of course it reads like a slingshot job, as she knew as soon as she had written it. The wonder of it is that it is readable just the same, and that is merely the wonder of her own talents, which she forgot to lay aside, her verve and enthusiasm and humor, her love of people and America. Some of this fabulous Melendy family are all-too-familiar literary characters: the crochety, dominant old matriarch, Madame Melendy; her heroic, empire-building son Vaughan, with his prim wife Emmy on the one hand, and his faithful love, a Yukon singing girl, Pansy Deleath, on the other (Miss Ferber, those names!); and even the youngest generation, Mike, gay, brave, loose-ends, then comes Pearl Harbor. All this to make it short and easy. But some of them, like Dike, Vaughan's son, and his wife, Lina Port, and a brief view of Emmy's pioneer mother, come sharply alive, when Miss Ferber takes any trouble with them. They add up, mixed in quality inside their stirring landscape, to a heartfelt love-letter to Seattle, written in haste. Next time, Miss Ferber, please write it out in longhand. We'll wait.

Edna Ferber

Vicki Baum's Vienna

ONCE IN VIENNA. By Vicki Baum. New York: Didier. 1945. 192 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT PICK

HANNES RASSIEM—a Danish-born, slowly aging first tenor at the Vienna opera and teacher at the conservatoire, picking and dropping young women as he pleases, thoroughly egocentric and yet childishly naive at times, living separated from his wife. . . .

MARIA KOUCZOWSKA—a noble-born soprano, hopelessly attached to her husband in spite of her own egotistic temperament. . . .

DINA DIMATTER—the illegitimate child of a minor ballet dancer by a high-ranking aristocrat, musical, earnest, and ambitious, falling in love with Rassiem and . . .

ELIS KERCKHOFF—the daughter of a well-to-do sculptor, who, nursing her mother to death, falls prey to the lure of morphine. . . .

These are the main characters of Miss Baum's present offering.

PLACE—the musical world of a sort of Vienna.

TIME—before World War I.

Well then, this, as I have to confess, is the first book by Miss Baum I've ever read, and though some of her addicts assure me it's one of her minor works, I yet think I can understand the immense popularity of her novels. Here is everything which makes for a wide audience: the pipe-dreams (and passing nightmares) of little people come "true," a self-assured keyhole familiarity with what may pass for the *grand monde,* a certain marshmallow softness with which she looks after all the troubles of her characters, a convenient combination of moral and pragmatic values, and a, so-to-speak, uninhibited intensity in presenting good, ready-made background material.

But there is little sense in being patronizing of a literary phenomenon which, whatever its artistic rank, has its social significance, and perhaps even its social merits. Obviously, the majority of fiction readers of both sexes want to stop at exactly the point where Miss Baum stops in portraying her world, whether out of deficiency or understanding—an understanding of her public, that is—I don't know. She creates a world of its own, and the reader is in it. Who asks for more?

The marital conflicts of that opera singer couple of hers, the enthusiasm of those girls who yield to the tenor's naive wolfishness, the earnestness of that good doctor, the money-mindedness of that old ballet dancer, and so on and so forth—all this reminds me of those old-fashioned cardboard dolls which could be dressed and stripped, and thus were supposed to give to the playing child a semblance of reality and with it a comforting connection with its own little being.

But here I am being patronizing again.

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Douglas Southall Freeman

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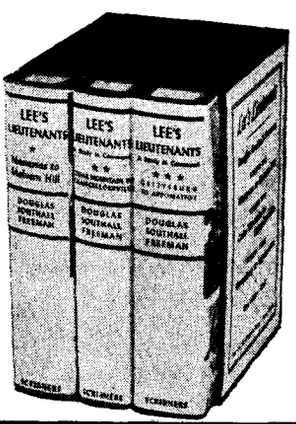

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"If I have *got* to be a distinguished chemist visiting Germany," Tommy said crossly, "I will be the most irritable, eccentric scientist that ever was."

TRUE to his word—Tommy Hambledon, secret agent extraordinary, is the most temperamental "Herr Professor" ever to set a bomb right in the Fuehrer's face! Invited to Berlin by the unsuspecting Reich believing he's Sigmund Ulseth, inventor of a secret and deadly explosive, Tommy again becomes the bane of Berlin. He sets up a laboratory where "stinks and bangs" are manufactured. He accepts the hospitality of Goering and Co. His explosive adventures reach the dangerous stage when the real Herr Professor returns... just as Goebbels is murmuring dreamily to Tommy, "You remind me strangely of someone I used to know."

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Cortez's Conquest of Mexico

CAPTAIN FROM CASTILE. By Samuel Shellabarger. Boston: Little, Brown & Co. 1944. 633 *pp.* $3.

Reviewed by HARRISON SMITH

FOR the background of a lusty and colorful historical novel it would be hard to find a better time and place than Spain and Mexico in the early sixteenth century, or a more exciting theme than Cortez's conquest of Mexico. A new world whose awareness embraced the discovery of the Americas was casting its light over Europe and blotting out what remained of medievalism. The mind of the youth of the Western world was turning toward the west across the great ocean to the new settlements in the West Indies and the mysterious lands beyond.

Fortunately, the author of "Captain from Castile" has gifts that are commensurate with the task he set for himself. His narrative style is lively and simple; his characters, although they are necessarily stereotyped, are not period costumes with sawdust inside, but something resembling flesh and blood; his knowledge of the Spain of that day and of the almost legendary conquest of Mexico must have been gained at the expense of years of study. His scenery therefore does not have to be dragged in by the ears nor do his characters speak the language of the moment, the "gadzooks" and the "odds-bodkins," of the historical novelists at the turn of the century. He permits his soldiers, or brigands, if you choose to call them that, an occasional easily-translated Spanish phrase, and manages it naturally enough. His hero, young Pedro de Vargas, develops a manly, and even a noble, character after a year or two of bloody deeds, but he is no plaster saint as are the heroes of so many romancers.

The plot provides enough historical information to give the reader the sense of continuity and the importance of the events he describes, but there is always sufficient fighting and lovemaking mixed in to keep one from being bored. His story carries you forward with it easily and irresistibly. Pedro is the son of a noble family whose father, a stiff-necked but sympathetic old warrior who has couched his lance in half the battles of Europe, has destined to be one of the squires of the aging chevalier Bayard, the knight *sans peur et sans reproche*. When he is nineteen an enemy at home coveting his father's lands ruthlessly thrusts his whole family into the bloody hands of the Spanish Inquisition. After a somewhat miraculous escape from the rack and boot of the torture chamber, Pedro and his mother and father flee, leaving the crushed body of his sister in the Casa Santa. Pedro breaks with the family tradition by finding his way with an old comrade to Cuba which, following the tradition of the gentle natives, had already been enslaved or liquidated. Then follows the invasion of Mexico under Cortez, of which even Prescott seems to have managed to make an unreal and somewhat horrible dream. In the "Captain from Castile," however, it seems easy enough.

This crushing of an ancient nation, the plunder and destruction of its cities, and its culture by a force that consisted originally of 600 foot soldiers, eighteen cavalry, and some artillery sailing from Trinidad with ten ships about the size of small river barges makes an epic tale that mounts to a crescendo of suspense and action with Montezuma's death, the slaughter of his people, and the destruction of his fabulous capital city. Pedro, by this time a hardened captain, leaves for Spain as the ambassador of Cortez to offer to the Spanish crown the incredible wealth of a new empire, and to the world a story of the almost bloodless conquest of a people that was to show Europe how simple, with the cross in one hand and a sword in the other, it might be to take the American continents and later vast populations in Asia.

Pedro's adventures at the Spanish court in fighting the conspiracy against Cortez's enemies, his vengeance on his family's enemy, and a belated wedding with his inamorata complete the book, as books like this should end, with everybody happy and the villains and the traitors dead.

That an historical romance as dashingly written and as carefully planned as "Captain From Castile," should be a success with the large audience for this kind of book seems obvious. Mr. Shellabarger follows the pattern of the modern historical novel which, although it has had other progenitors, stems mainly from Hervey Allen's "Anthony Adverse." The recipe for it is not difficult to understand, however hard it may be to achieve as good an example. You take a time in history when battle, murder, and sudden death are commonplace; the Crusades, the Napoleonic wars, or our own Civil War, for example. You find a stalwart and a highly uncomplicated young extrovert for the hero, provide him with one or two relentless enemies who pursue him to the last chapter, give him one woman to dream about and one or two more to sleep with, stir well into a simplified background and there should

(*Continued on page* 28)

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HOME *in the* WEST

by Harvey Fergusson

This personal history of a well-known writer's boyhood and youth is the essence of our Southwest going back through three generations of American life. Full of fresh, wild zest and savor, it is a rich vigorous picture of the American yesterdays. $2.75

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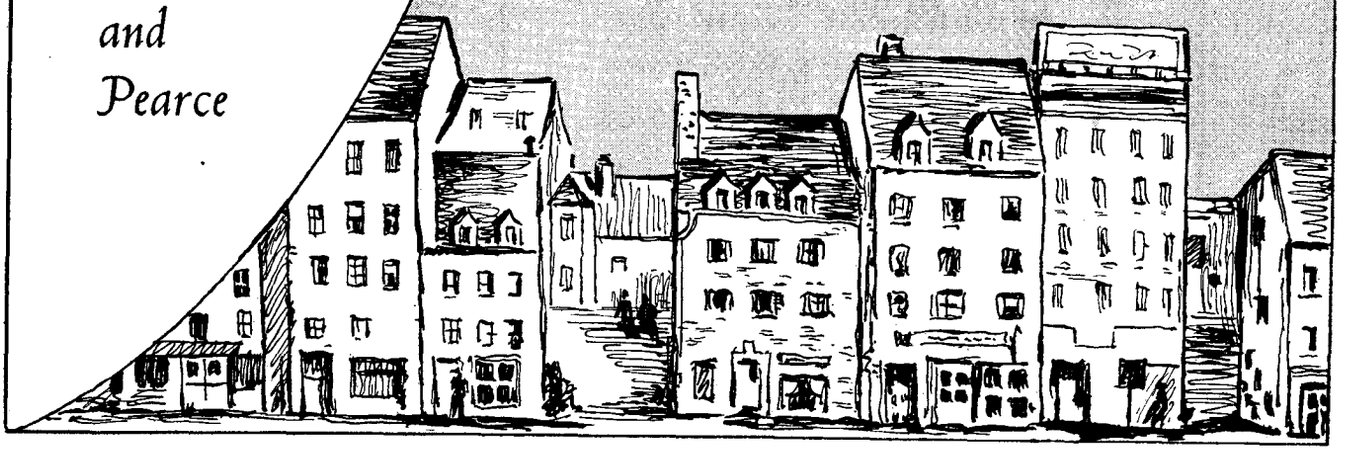
Two Solitudes

by Hugh MacLennan



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(*Continued from page 26*)
emerge a highly popular six- or seven-hundred page romance.

As we have said, this is exactly what Mr. Shellabarger achieves and the reader devours page after page and sighs with a pleasant sense of repletion when it is all over and the hero is married to the one woman in the world for him and he can settle down on his family estate in tranquillity for the rest of his life. But if you think about this and other escapist romances like it, after you have closed the book, you will find yourself vaguely dissatisfied with it and with yourself. Take it up three months later and it will be astonishingly difficult to read again. It would be interesting to find out how many people have been able to reread "Anthony Adverse," or even that superb example of designed historical fiction, "Gone With the Wind." It is as if you had at one time been stuffed with a rich dessert and could never bear the taste of it afterward.

The publisher obliquely compares "Captain From Castile" with "The Count of Monte Cristo" and "The Three Musketeers." This is not fair to Dumas, the great master of this kind of fiction. Dumas can be read over and over again, though by what magic it is hard to discover; so can Thackeray's "Henry Esmond"; Dickens's "A Tale of Two Cities," and Stevenson's "Treasure Island." Perhaps it is because in Mr. Shellabarger's book there is both too much and not enough, too much excitement and too little wit.

Rosemary Kutak

whose mystery novel

DARKNESS OF SLUMBER

has been selected as one of the 10 Best Detective Stories of 1944 by the *New York Times Book Review* and "the outstanding first-mystery of the year, and one of the best" by *The Saturday Review.*

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MAIN MYSTERIES LINE

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Balkan Cauldron

BALKAN BACKGROUND. By Bernard Newman. New York: The Macmillan Company. 1945. 453 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by HENRY B. KRANZ

BERNARD NEWMAN, English writer and lecturer for the British Ministry of Information, cousin of the Shakespearean actor Maurice Evans, for fifteen years spent each summer traveling through Europe, mostly on a bicycle. His forty travel books—eight of them have been published in this country—have been noted as factual and accurate. "Balkan Background," his latest work, contains graphic pictures of all the countries that used to make up the powder keg of Europe and are still smoldering, as for instance, Greece or Yugoslavia.

Mr. Newman's heart, as the heart of most writers on this subject, is with the poor Balkan peasants who comprise seventy-five percent of the population of their countries and have suffered for many years mainly because the Great Powers used the Balkan states as puppets in the machinations of power-politics. Mr. Newman believes that the many wars between the Balkan countries during the last century and a half were directly due to foreign intervention.

For this sad state of affairs he blames both the British and the Americans, and also the Russians. "The ignorance of the British today," he writes, "is as disconcerting as the lack of interest." As to America, he says: "It is an American fashion to base the study of politics on personalities. The mode may be right in America but it is quite wrong in Europe." (But he forgets that the Europeans, not the Americans, introduced "Leader-worship.") The Russians are blamed simply because they are spreading communism in countries where it cannot take root: peasants are and will always be against communism.

"Balkan Background" is not a detailed account of the industrial, military, and cultural interests of the Balkan states, but rather a political background of their affairs today. The author outlines the history of Bulgaria, Rumania, Albania, Greece, Yugoslavia, and Turkey. He tells of all the national quarrels and political rivalries among the two dozen races that live in that most shattered part of Europe and thinks that there never was a time when close attention to the Balkan affairs was as essential as today. He believes that most Balkan countries center about the same feature—minorities—and that, therefore, there will be no permanent peace in the Balkans until its racial squabbles

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are solved. He discusses the vexed territorial arguments which continue to disturb the nationalistic states but he does not make the mistake of considering the problem of peace in the Balkans mainly as military and political. He is convinced that the prosperity of all Balkan states is of utmost importance at this crucial stage of history. All these states are very poor. The average cash income of the Balkan peasant family is seventy dollars a year. Out of this taxes must be paid.

No definite solutions are offered because the author, when discussing the problems of Bessarabia, Transylvania, Macedonia, and Dobrudscha, the four danger spots, is in sympathy with all the parties involved. He says, and this is hardly satisfying: "If all Balkan problems merely involved a decision between right or wrong, then our task would be relatively easy. More often, however, our choice has to be made between two rights, or occasionally, two wrongs." Ethnic, historic, strategic, and economic claims are weighted carefully, but the final judgment is left to the reader.

There are some rather astonishing statements in this otherwise highly informative book. Mr. Newman defends King Carol of Rumania who "did his best for his country in very difficult circumstances. The King, in order to arrest the confusion in the political scene, set up a military dictatorship." Bulgaria's claims to the Dobrudscha are justified by the Bulgarian dream of the San Stefano frontiers, and Rumania's refusal of a plebiscite in Bessarabia by her fear that her neighbors might otherwise have also asked for a plebiscite in the disputed territories. A solution of the Bessarabian problem, too, is offered: the formation of a Jewish state, not an independent state but with local self-government affiliated either with Russia or with Rumania—a solution already nullified by Russia's occupation of that territory.

Mr. Newman, in his book "The New Europe," had suggested a series of regional federations as a first step towards European and world unity. In "Balkan Background" he outlines the basic plan of a Balkan charter as a basis of discussion, encouraging the formation of a Balkan Federation. The territorial integrity of the Balkan states and later of any Balkan Federation should receive international guarantees. But this will certainly be a part of the job of any new League of Nations, unless Russia presents England and America with a *fait accompli* in all these countries with the exception of Greece. Mr. Newman finally recommends as important the raising of peasant standards in all Balkan countries. The financing would have to be done by the governments of the Great Powers and not by private interests. Here, too, Russia's future role is underestimated.

Mr. Newman's ideas may seem to be rather unrealistic, and his interest in any solution "too British," but neither the professional nor the superficially interested student of world politics can afford to overlook this timely and well-written book.

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— January 14-31 —

Fraser Young's Literary Crypt: No. 84

A cryptogram is writing in cipher. Every letter is part of a code that remains constant throughout the puzzle. Answer to No. 84 will be found in the next issue.

SXGG XZ H PWSXDWI VXUUWVFMXU HCHRWUG MUFWJWGF MU LWHDWU PWZXJW EUZWSF.

—PXDWW.

Answer to Literary Crypt No. 83

TO ATTEMPT TO ADVISE CONCEITED PEOPLE IS LIKE WHISTLING AGAINST THE WIND. —HOOD.

Try this sample from
"the gayest book of the season"
of the things that happen to George

A neighbor drops in on George and Helen in their new home—but let George tell you about it—

Not only curtains wasn't up; neither was the ceiling. I was in my swimming trunks working in the living room. I heard a voice introducing itself. My God! A lady! And I'm over seventy-five percent naked. I stepped into nearest place handy. Happened to be old grampa clock Helen bought at auction few weeks before.

Helen came in. They began to have lady conversation about antiques.

Mrs. Cleevendon said, "And your clock?"

" . . . is signed inside." Helen came across the room and threw open the door.

"How do you do," I said. I came out. "Happened as I was going swimming I noticed this clock was running slow. About five minutes. Little adjustment. Be all right."

Mrs. Cleevendon turned green. "I'm afraid," she said, "I must go."

"I'm sorry you can't stay," I said, "but please come again. And next time I hope to have pleasure to meet your husband."

"I lost Mr. Cleevendon three years ago."

"I'm very sorry," I said, "I hope you find again."

"Good-by. Good-by."

Helen could hardly wait for her to get in the car. "He's dead, her husband. My God! You hope she finds again!"

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anything can happen

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The Regional Work of C. F. Ramuz

THE END OF ALL MEN. By C. F. Ramuz. New York: Pantheon Books Inc. 1944. 223 *pp.* $2.50.

Reviewed by ROBERT PICK

SOME artifice has always seemed to be missing in the work of C. F. Ramuz—some little trick or a compromise of that sort which made the writings of his gifted disciple, Jean Giono, so much more palatable than his own to the reading public. Ramuz's Continental fame has never been entirely free of a certain restraint in the reader's appreciation—and this goes for his own country, too, where no one would hesitate, on the other hand, to call him the greatest living writer of Switzerland. As mountaineers everywhere, Swiss people have a tradition of, and a sense for, genuine story-telling, and yet they have not always quite known what to make of the thirty-odd volumes of short stories, novels, and essays Ramuz has published over the past forty years. They have often tagged him as the "poet of the Vaudland" (one of the remotest parts of the Vallais), and thus conveniently pigeonholed him as a regional author.

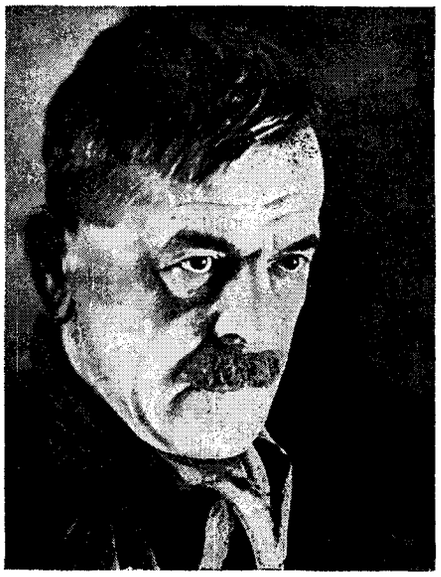
True, C. F. Ramuz is regional. He has never grown tired of portraying the "small" world of Swiss farmers and villagers. But these peasants are, as it were, portrayed in the pre-national state of their ancestors, and are Swiss (or, for that matter, *Vallaisois*) only as much as the knights and damsels of fourteenth-century painters, re-enacting Biblical life, are Italian or German. In short Ramuz's regionalism belongs to a category beyond, not leading to, nationalism; it dissolves in universalistic values pure and simple. Stubbornly clinging to his native soil (in the narrowest sense of the word), Ramuz gains in depth by stripping his characters of whatever is non-essential to the spectacle of human kind fighting itself and the world.

The present book depicts a great universal catastrophe as it overcomes our planet. But this is not the superstitious mass hysteria which, at the arrival of the year 1000, throughout Europe drove people into frenzy, religious rapture, and last-ditch debauchery; nor is it the comedy set into motion through an Orson Welles hoax. This is the real thing—and from the first the reader is made to feel its reality, and to pity those dalemen who "did not want to believe it." The news is "too big." "It is not for us, it is too big. Our own world is quite small. Our own world only goes where our eyes go; it is our eyes that make it. . . . It would be necessary to imagine the heavens, stars, continents, oceans, the equator, the two poles. But one imagines nothing that one is not and has not. . . ."

Slowly the impending catastrophe is driven home to men. Unbearable heat creeps into the valley—an "enormous sun, dark red, which could be looked at" by the naked eye bears proof of the planetary system upset. At first some people still go on with their work, or pretend to go on with it—while others already have begun to disrupt the social order. Reduced to their natural state, men plunge into the lake, take to the glacier, march on—until the breath of another world touches their brow.

That is, of course, but a very poor account of what happens in this extraordinary novel. What the author really does reminds one of the *danse macabre* of medieval miracle plays: he presents the various strata of his valley's society in those very last days of their, and everybody's, world—which, "being many yet but one," face the great quiet with all of man's courage and all of man's attachment to the earth.

M. de Rougemont, in his introductory note, uses the term "anti-glamor" to describe the peculiarity of Ramuz's style. Utmost brittleness and a self-imposed spareness are indeed the outstanding qualities of his art. They do not make for easy reading; with all its fierce sectionalism and its earth-bound aura, his art remains highly esoteric and difficult to approach.



—From the portrait by Germaine Martin
C. F. Ramuz

A Relativistic View of the Arts

ART, THE CRITICS AND YOU. By Curt J. Ducasse. New York: Askar Priest. 1944. 170 *pp.* $2.

Reviewed by FRANK J. MATHER, JR.

THIS is on the whole a hard-boiled, debunking book, and it has the merits of its class, in provoking the reader to take his own position pro or con.

The author's point of view is relativistic. The artist works to relieve and objectify his feelings. Communication of his feelings is merely incidental, and always imperfect. Every bearer or beholder simply makes out of the work of art what he can. And such appreciations are individual and infinitely various. Empirically what we call beauty is usually, though not necessarily, among the aims of the artist, and a chief resource for the art lover. But there is no objective or provable beauty, hence no probably good or bad taste. In the criticism of art there is no authority, but if congenial, the critic is useful to the art lover, as a more experienced friend might be useful in visiting a gallery or listening to music. The rich scope the author gives to the arts is shown in a chapter on the sartorial and cosmetic arts, which after all are adjacent to the generally admitted arts of pantomime and the dance. All this is expressed, if without literary distinction, in a clear and vigorous fashion. There are no confusing or beguiling overtones in the author's forthright rhetoric.

It will be clear that, on such a basis, no science or philosophy of esthetics is possible. Indeed a systematic study would be merely empirical, resulting at best in such a collection of cases as William James presented in "The Varieties of Religious Experience." The oversimplification that limits the author's thinking is his treating the subject as confined to the psychology of the artist and the art lover, and in neglecting the collective aspect and his unreal tradition of taste. In such studies we never arrive at absolutes, but we do escape from a complete relativity into a realm of sufficient going authority, into a realm of working norms. It is the failure to take into account these collective and social aspects of his problem that leaves a sense of oversimplification after reading Professor Ducasse's vigorous pages. Having made a considerable demolition of traditional nonsense, he has not built much of anything on the ruins.

BUY WAR BONDS AND SPEED VICTORY

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the Phoenix Nest

SO far I haven't had any leave-out couplets that are really good enough to print, or so I believe. I said that I would quote something on Jerusalem Garters. In the *Seventeenth Century News Letter,* a periodical edited by James M. Osborn of Yale and others, the suggestion is made that Christopher Morley compile, as a companion volume to Midriff Poems, one of Garter Poems, appropriately dedicated to the Knights of that ancient Order. To start it, the editors contribute this excerpt from a rare seventeenth century poem "to the best of our knowledge yet unedited and anonymous."

TO MRS. A. G. . . . WITH A PRESENT OF JERUSALEM GARTERS

These trifles, though far fetch'd, not dearly bought,
And therefore but half good for ladies' thought:
The pilgrims of Hierusalem beg
More consecration from your leg;
The Order of the Garter we renew:
Title and honour it shall take from you.
Some virgin did these letters braid
For a devout and learned maid
There, where the best of virgins made abode,
Mysterious flowers upspringing where she trode.
Th' experienced nuns thus take delight
To weave a fairer hand than we can write;
So may these holy bands embrace
About your tender gart'ring place,
Themselves in time reprinting there again,
And set forth new editions in your skin.

As for Mr. Morley, lately he told us that he was humming to himself, after sprinkling ashes "on our slippery slopy little driveway,"

We climbed the steep ascent of Heaven
With ashes on the grade.

He says, too, that having been likely the first to try to put back into the print Walt Whitman's 1855 Preface, in a little book that "everyone but me and Jo Davidson have forgotten," he was startled that Dorothy Thompson or Norman Cousins printed it in the *SRL* as of 1857, so he looked up his little copy of that "Two Prefaces" (Doubleday, Page: 1926) and what did he find there but a clipping of the Old Mandarin (See *SRL* of April 11, 1936) "where is printed, yes in letters and ink":

Some are troubled
Because Walt Whitman's birthplace
Has not been bought as a Memorial.
But any great poet is also born
In the heart of the reader
Discovering his magic for the first or thousandth time.

One of Walt's birthplaces
Is room 1906 at the Congress hotel
Where, last Sunday, Endymion and I
Read the 1855 Preface
In a glory of laughing denial and tumultuous assent.

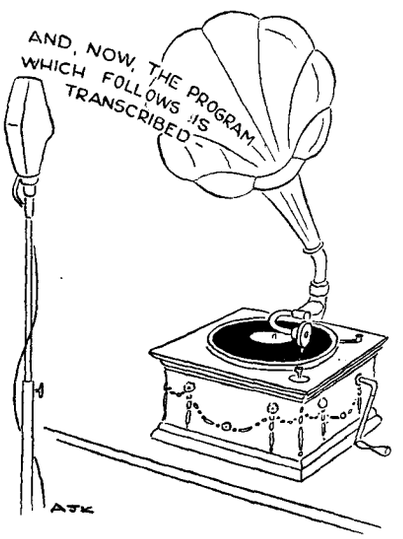
Words are stronger than houses;
They are raised from silence
And born again.

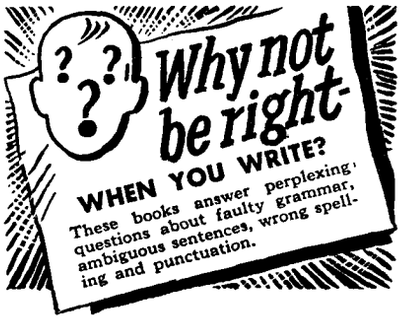
He wishes much to know How, When, Where, Why, Dorothy Thompson came across the 1855 Preface. *"Would she write us and tell us?"* Also Jesse Merritt, the County Historian of Nassau County, Long Island, says Mrs. Townsend who wrote concerning "Ticonderoga" has a good Long Island name of three centuries. And he wonders whether R. L. S. picked up the name Ticonderoga when at Saranac? And we *do* remember the Clam Diggers when we visited Adelphi Village with Chris. "We" were then the editorial "we."

I have now taken up art in a serious way and have just completed my first oil painting, "Kit Carson's Dream." The Phantom Horse is good, anyway!

Donald Marshall of the city desk of *The New York Times* writes that he has a copy of the first issue of *The Saturday Reveiw of Literature.* "I don't know whether these are plentiful or scarce around your office, but if you or a colleague have any use for it, I should be glad to send it on." He deposes further:

The recent poetic exchanges, in your column, about *The New York Times,* remind me of some tomfoolery on the same subject in which

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an erudite friend of mine indulged some years ago. The occasion was the failure of *The Times* to print, in its daily edition, a reproduction of Titian's "Venus and the Lute Player," along with its story of the Metropolitan Museum's acquisition of this canvas; and its later publication (nine days later) of the picture in the Sunday art section. I commented on this inconsistency in a bit of doggerel, which I sent to my friend, a professor at Columbia, who responded with the following:

VENUS MAKES *THE TIMES* AT LAST

Concealment of the frankly sexual
Is flouted by the truly intellexual.
Witness *The Times,* which feels 'tis not its mitian
To help suppress a masterpiece by Titian;
Though possibly some editorial ruction
Explains nine days' delay in reproduction.
Still, reproduction even sensual
Requires a period novimensual;
If Venus makes *The Times,* then, in nine days,
The Times may well deserve a crown of bays.
Congratulations, *Times!* Though I confess
Venus could "make" me in a good deal less!

Experiment, 79 Q Street, Salt Lake City 3, Utah, offers a prize of $25 for the best unpublished poem submitted by February 1, 1945. You have a few days still. The judges will be three noted poets, Thomas Hornsby Ferril, William Carlos Williams, and Genevieve Taggard. *Experiment* is a quarterly of new poetry published coöperatively by fifteen poets residing in different parts of the country.

WILLIAM ROSE BENÉT.

ANSWERS TO LITERARY QUIZ

1. Edward Ponderovo, in "Tono Bungay," by H. G. Wells.
2. Psmith, in "Leave It to Psmith," by P. G. Wodehouse.
3. Sherlock Holmes, in "The Adventure of the Blue Carbuncle," by A. Conan Doyle.
4. Little Buttercup, in "H.M.S. Pinafore," by W. S. Gilbert.
5. Mrs. Jarley, in "The Old Curiosity Shop," by Dickens.
6. Theodore Gumbril, in "Antic Hay," by Aldous Huxley.
7. Roger Mifflin, in "The Haunted Bookshop," by Christopher Morley.
8. The Duke of Bilgewater, in "Huckleberry Finn," by Mark Twain.
9. Andy Hawks, in "Show Boat," by Edna Ferber.
10. The Countess of Nosh, in "Gertrude the Governess," by Stephen Leacock.

PERSONALS

ADVERTISEMENTS will be accepted in this column for things wanted or unwanted; personal services to let or required; literary or publishing offers not easily classified elsewhere; miscellaneous items appealing to a special and intelligent clientèle; jobs wanted, houses or camps for rent, tutoring, traveling companions, ideas for sale; communications of a decorous nature, expressions of opinion (limited to fifty lines). All advertisements must be consonant with the purpose and character of The Saturday Review. Ads of a strictly personal nature are limited to an exchange of correspondence, thus also enabling an exchange of reference. Rates: 10 cents per word including signature. Count two additional words for Box and Number. Payment in full must be received ten days in advance of publication. We forward all mail received in answer to box numbers. Address Personal Dept., Saturday Review, 25 West 45th Street, New York City.

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PAINT WITH ME! It's fun. Arthur Silz, 224 East 12 Street, GR 5-1145.

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CULTURED GENTLEMAN, interested in the concerns of beauty, art and life, would like to exchange letters with his confreres. Box 737-K.

PERSONALS

YOUNG COLORED MAN, recently handicapped, college trained, desires correspondence with sympathetic colored females of the pansophic type. Box 748-K.

ROOM WANTED by publisher's West Coast salesman in New York off and on four months a year. Will share apartment expense. References exchanged. Box 751-K.

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TEACHERS COLLEGE (COLUMBIA) STUDENT, male, 22, draft exempt, candidate for B.S. in English this February, would like teaching position in private or public school in or near NYC while pursuing M.A. evenings and Saturday. No student teaching experience, but has tutored privately. Box 754-K.

WANTED—COMPANION HOUSEKEEPER: for retired newspaperman and wife living in New Canaan, Conn. Plain cooking—own room—one who can drive car. Box 755-K.

YOUNG MAN interested acting, desires correspondence. Box 770-K.

GENTLEMAN, HIGH-TYPE, will correspond with sincere young lady. Box 771-K.

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NEED PERSON OF LEISURE to help struggling literary woman to assemble and write human-interest material for publication. Box 772-K. ELdorado 5-8389. N. Y. C.

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Name .....
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BOSTON MEMO: WHIPSMART, idea-wise copywriter (trade, consumer) with big town newspaper and agency background seeks job in his native Hub. Worth more, asks only $6,000; age 33. Box 760-K.

LIBRARIAN with experience in children's work and in library school teaching would like public or county library position on east coast or in San Francisco Bay region. Box 761-K.

NOVELS OF DORNFORD YATES to complete set of favorite fiction. State titles and price. Bettina Jones, 315 Whitney Avenue, New Haven, Conn.

WRITER (BACHELOR) would like comfortable room and bath in pleasant quiet surroundings Middle East Side Manhattan, N. Y. C. Box 762-K.

PASTOR SERVING SMALL CHURCH in Southern mountains would appreciate donations of phonographic records (classical music) and books. Box 763-K.

REFINED YOUNG LADY invites correspondence combining intellectuality, understanding, felicity, spirituality. Box 764-K.

YOUNG PACIFIST TEACHER would appreciate correspondence with those sincerely sympathetic. Box 765-K.

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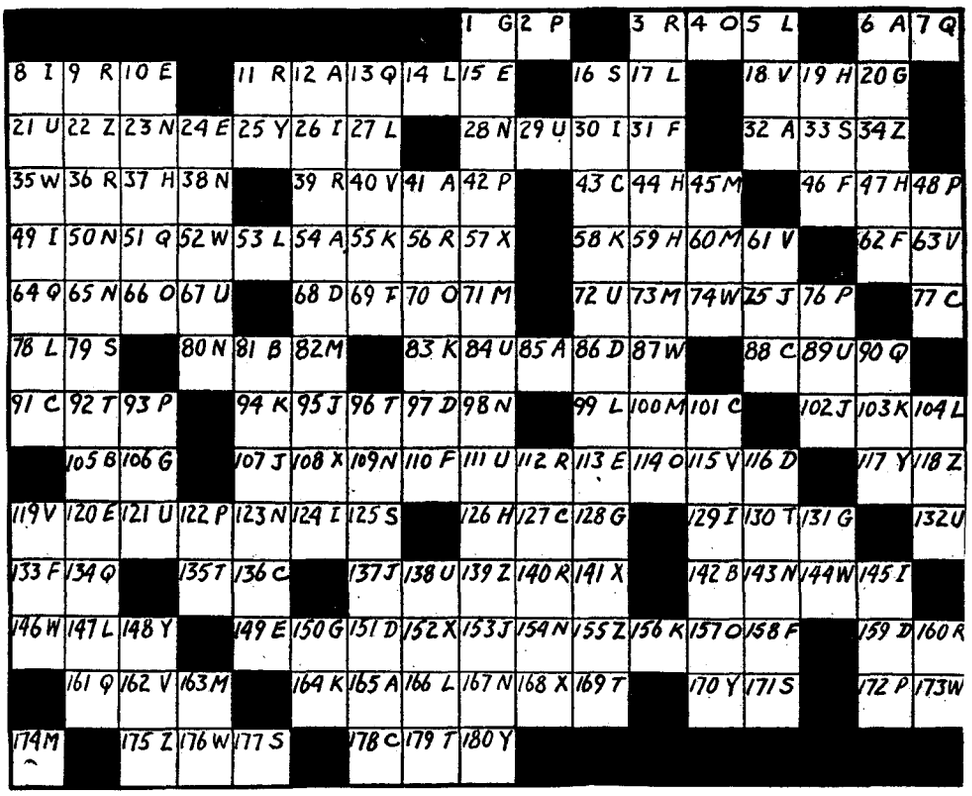
The Crostics Club

IT is not my intention to utilize this column for lapses in precision of English usage, but in view of the comment I made some time ago as to the flagrant misuse of *that* and *which* so common among good writers, I should like to quote a paragraph from the Jan. 6 issue of *The Publishers' Weekly* and raise the question of your agreement with me. The section is titled "Little, Brown Sells Textbook List to Heath," and the following is the second of two paragraphs: "Heath, Little, Brown and the Atlantic Monthly Press are working out arrangements under which textbooks published by Heath, which have a potential market as trade books as well, will be issued in trade editions by Little, Brown. Trade books or manuscripts originating at Little, Brown and the Atlantic Monthly Press, which seem suitable for textbook editions, will be published as textbooks by Heath, in addition to the regular trade editions issued by Little, Brown." As the wording stands I claim the use of *which* implies that *all* textbooks published by Health have a potential market value as trade books as well, and similarly with the other *which;* whereas the writer means *only those* that have a potential market as trade books as well. The commas, too, support my contention. This is not a matter of taste in usage but of clearness. Now, recently I received an unsigned letter from a California puzzler inveighing against my "utterly absurd" use of the word *phase* in "that phase of the *SRL,*" sending her "condolences at my having contracted the flu that is going the rounds in the use of this word" and adding: "One would surmise that a writer whose profession is that of handling, observing, studying, and scrutinizing words would be inoculated against 'catching' any of these diseases in the press, etc." I can say only that I lay no claims to such perfection, that I have little time to scrutinize in general the press, that the smoke, if there was any, was scarcely worth such acrimonious fire, and that I consider unsigned invectives cowardly in that they give the recipient no fair opportunity to answer personally. Hence this exposure!

From Walter Schafer, Hartford, comes an intriguing suggestion and I think I shall try it out after the sheaf of DCs already done through February is exhausted. "The fun," he writes, "resulting from the confusion of definitions in a recent Double Crostic in the *SRL* has given me the idea for a variant in the puzzles that you may wish to consider. The idea is to have an unkeyed word in each puzzle." Mr. Schafer explains in detail how such a scheme would work out, concluding thus: "Such a 'numberless child' wandering around amid the other correctly keyed words would create some interest and add, I do believe, to the fun which your acrostics always arouse."

E. S. K.



Double-Crostics: No. 566

By ELIZABETH S. KINGSLEY

DIRECTIONS

To solve this puzzle you must guess twenty-six words, the definitions of which are given in the column headed DEFINITIONS. The letters in each word to be guessed are numbered. These numbers appear under the dashes in the column headed WORDS. There is a dash for each letter in the required word. The key letters in the squares are for convenience, indicating to which word in the definitions each letter in the diagram belongs. When you have guessed a word, fill it in on the dashes; then write each letter in the correspondingly numbered square on the puzzle diagram. When the squares are all filled in you will find (by reading from left to right) a quotation from a famous author. Reading up and down the letters mean nothing. The black squares indicate ends of words; therefore words do not necessarily end at the right side of the diagram.

When the column headed WORDS is filled in, the initial letters spell the name of the author and the title of the piece from which the quotation has been taken. Authority for spelling and definitions is Webster's New International Dictionary (1940 edition).

The solution of last week's *Double Crostic* will be found on page 23 of this issue.

DEFINITIONS

A. Character in "The Merchant of Venice."

B. Largest island of the Kazan Group.

C. Czech conductor and composer (1824-76; opera "Bluebeard").

D. Cry of encouragement to fox-hounds (Hunting).

E. Norwegian novelist, holder of 1928 Nobel prize in literature (1882-).

F. Luncheon (orig. India).

G. *Coronilla varia,* European vetch naturalized in eastern U. S.

H. Wife of Solomon and mother of Rehoboam.

I. Chief of the Gibichungs (Wagner: "Götterdämmerung").

J. Low, chirping notes.

K. Irish-born American journalist and historian (1883-).

L. The *Mount* haunted by the boar of Hercules' Third Labor.

M. A white Madeira wine (named from the grapes).

N. Impracticable.

O. Seat of treaty ending War of 1812 (Dec. 24, 1814).

P. Selfhood.

Q. Novel by Disraeli (1870).

R. Frequently for a space of time (Poetic).

S. Composer of opera interpolating Moore's "Last Rose of Summer" (with *von*).

T. One of the largest of the northern Marianas.

U. Birds of the family *Sittidae* (long wing, short tail, tree-climbing).

V. Mother of Meleager and Dejanira (caused his death with firebrand).

W. Black varnish tree; or the varnish from it.

X. List of books prohibited or restricted by church authorities (R. C. Ch.)

Y. A wafer, esp. of altar bread (Hist.)

Z. English music critic and writer of studies of Wagner, Elgar, etc. (1868-).

WORDS

32 165 54 12 6 41 85

105 142 81

127 101 136 88 43 178 77 91

116 159 68 151 97 86

120 113 24 15 149 10

158 133 46 62 110 31

1 150 106 20 131 128

44 126 59 37 47 19

8 124 49 129 145 26 30

153 95 107 75 137 102

58 94 164 103 156 83 55

5 14 104 166 53 17 99 147 78 27

60 163 82 45 174 73 100 71

143 23 154 80 123 38 109 50 167 28 65 9

114 4 66 157 70

122 76 2 93 48 172 42

64 90 161 51 13 7 134

36 160 3 11 9 112 39 56 140

171 125 16 79 33 177

179 169 92 135 130 96 69

67 29 121 89 132 111 21 84 138 72

119 115 18 162 40 61 63

146 173 52 176 144 35 74 87

152 168 57 141 108

170 117 25 148 180

139 118 34 155 22 175

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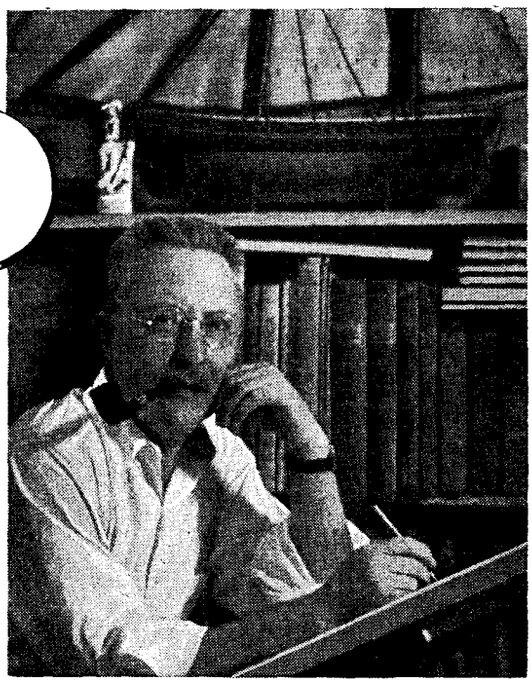
ONE OF A SERIES OF ADVERTISEMENTS ON

THE GREAT AMERICAN ILLUSTRATORS

THIS ONE BEING ABOUT **Edward A. Wilson**



EDWARD A. WILSON had already made his mark as an illustrator of American advertisements, when he began to experiment with the illustration of books.

Out of these experiments has emerged an American idiom in which lie the beginnings of an American style in illustration and an American tradition.

But, strangely enough, it was a Christmas card that really launched Edward Wilson on this career. In 1921, he sent his friends a woodcut of a sailor, entitled, "Home for Christmas." This design was the spark which set off *Iron Men and Wooden Ships.*

It was the old firm of Doubleday Page who gave the artist a thousand dollars in advance royalties. Off went Wilson to his summer home at Truro on Cape Cod, where he spent the summer doing the woodcuts and drawings. Into them he poured his pent-up love of the sea, sailors and their songs. It doesn't require much imagination to believe that Wilson sang as he worked, and that the chanties he decorated echoed among the rafters of his studio, which looks out to sea!

THE TIMING was perfect, though circumstantial. It was 1924. This book—*Iron Men and Wooden Ships,* edited by Frank Shay, with an introduction by William McFee, burst like a bombshell on a receptive public. It was a collection of sailor's chanties, which, said Ernest Elmo Calkins, had been "handed down like the Apostolic succession, from crew to crew."

Wilson had struck a responsive chord in many American hearts. He had taken us back to those roaring days of the clipper ships when ships were wooden and sailors more individual; when American ships were the pride of New England and put into every port of the old world, under canvas.

Not only does this represent a book decorated by an artist in love with his subject, but it marks an important milestone in American book illustration, quite as important as the advent of Howard Pyle's *Book of Pirates;* and, since Wilson had been a student of Pyle, it was Wilson's way of paying tribute to his master. It is a connecting link with the chapbook art of eighteenth century England, when woodcuts were bold *without apology* and gay with color.

WHAT WAS THE BACKGROUND of this artist who deserves such praise? Was he a "land" sailor or does he really have salt water in his blood?

Edward A. Wilson was born in Glasgow, Scotland, in 1886. He was a small boy when his parents moved to Rotterdam, Holland, where the family engaged in the business of shipping. From this biographical note it is clear that Wilson was exposed to a sea tradition from the beginning.

But then in 1893, the Wilsons moved to America and took up residence in the thriving port of Chicago. And though salt water had given way to fresh water, still Lake Michigan is no pond, and Wilson made several trips out of Chicago on lumber schooners.

In 1909, he made the important decision to study with Howard Pyle, who for some years had conducted his private school for incipient illustrators at Wilmington, Delaware. To this school came artists from all over the nation; artists who have since gained fame.

Wilson came to Howard Pyle's school ripe for the overlay of professional instruction. In the two years he spent at the school, he gained a mastery of composition which has been his greatest forte ever since.

Instead of returning to Chicago, Edward Wilson went to New York and began his professional career as an advertising illustrator. When he wasn't working for the advertising agencies as a free lance, he was busy turning out decorations and illustrations for the magazines—all of which, with only a few exceptions, have used his work. Year after year his work received medals and honorable mentions.

EVEN THE MOST down-to-earth art directors recognized the "bookish" flavor of Wilson's work. Many of his greatest advertising successes have been commissions that have encouraged him to exploit his imagination.

In 1930, George Macy commissioned the artist to illustrate *Robinson Crusoe* for the first group of books distributed to the members of The Limited Editions Club. It has been cited by many as the finest edition of this much loved classic.

By the time the *Robinson Crusoe* appeared, Edward Wilson was established as an illustrator of sea stories—which, for one endowed as he is with an interest in many subjects, was too limited to satisfy his ambitions. Two years later, when he made *The Last of the Mohicans* for George Macy, all doubts concerning the range of Wilson's ability were dispelled. This book, printed under the eagle eye of Will Ransom, with the color drawings printed in the Jean Berté watercolor process, provided a combination so perfect in execution that even the experts could find no fault. A set of the color plates, with the original drawings and instructions to the color printers, may be seen at the New York Public Library.

The Wilson association with George Macy has been particularly fruitful. For Macy's Limited Editions Club, or for Macy's Heritage Club, he has illustrated *The Tempest, Anthony Adverse, The Man Without a Country, Green Mansions, A Shropshire Lad, Treasure Island.* He is now at work upon *Westward Ho!*

It is probable that there is not an artist alive who can match Edward A. Wilson in the creation of illustrations for a salty tale of the sea, or for a stirring swashbuckling tale, or for a cloak-and-sword romance peopled with men posed in romantic positions and dressed in colorful uniforms. And it is probable that not more than two or three of living artists have done so much to establish an American tradition in illustration. He is one of The Great American Illustrators, indeed.—*From an article about Mr. Wilson's work by* NORMAN KENT *in* American Artist.

DRAWING FOR ROBINSON CRUSOE

DRAWING FOR TREASURE ISLAND

DRAWING FOR THE LAST OF THE MOHICANS

DRAWING FOR THE MAN WITHOUT A COUNTRY

Special Announcement

A large, handsome, profusely illustrated volume is going to be issued toward the end of this year, in which the beauty of Edward A. Wilson's work will be set forth. THE BOOK OF EDWARD A. WILSON, it will be called. It will be sold for ten dollars per copy. BUT—

We want now to begin the compilation of a list of those people who have a lively interest in Mr. Wilson, or a lively interest in illustration in general. THEREFORE—

We now make *you* a very special kind of offer:

If *you* will fill out and send us the coupon below, thus entering your order for this book now, we will send you a copy for $2.50 when the first printing is ready!

YES, A TEN DOLLAR BOOK FOR TWO FIFTY IF YOU SEND IN THIS

Reservation Coupon

THE HERITAGE PRESS
595 MADISON AVENUE, NEW YORK 22

Please reserve for me a copy of THE BOOK OF EDWARD A. WILSON out of the first printing which you expect to have ready later this year.

I understand that this book will be placed on sale at $10 per copy; but that, because I am placing this reservation now, you will send a copy to me with a bill *for only $2.50.*

NAME .....

ADDRESS .....

.....

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* * * * *

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That is why the concluding chapter of this great work is entitled: "The Next Twenty Years In American History." This is the ultimate, the decisive test of the Historical Field Theory.

Either it is all moonshine, or history has become a science.

One's first impression may be that, at best, this chapter can be only a series of very shrewd guesses. Actually it is the crowning achievement of a rigid analysis extending over two volumes, and 1800 pages.

Throughout this analysis the reader is taken fully into the author's confidence as to basic principles and procedural methods.

See, for instance, pages 314-17 of the Periods In American History. There is a section entitled, "A Little Aside Wherein the Writer and the Reader Consider Together the Further Development of this Work."

Then you will understand why Sterling North says of this work that "it is based upon a background as wide, and mental processes more objective and honest than those of Oswald Spengler."

Look over the Table of Contents of the volume entitled the Historical Field Theory. The book proves to be encyclopedic in conception, scholarly in treatment, warmly human in style, and not without a sly humor to relieve the tension of concentrated study.

There is not a single recognized authority on history and society, classical or modern, whose basic theories are not subjected to critical analysis. Step by step during this study, the foundations of a new science are being laid—the epochal Historical Field Theory is being evolved.

The chapter on Causality or Indeterminacy in History is a triumph both in logical reasoning and clarity in presentation. Quantum physics, Relativity and Indeterminacy—Planck, Einstein and Heisenberg—assist in chiseling the solid granite of this new, revolutionary theory in history.

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